



PLANNING REPORT

PREPARED FOR
THE LOVELAND INSPIRE COALITION

JULY 26, 2017



PREPARED BY
DESIGNWORKSHOP

The **Positive** Place
For Kids



This page:
Initial Public Meeting: Jan 24, 2017

Cover:
A City with a HeART sculptures

Vision Summary

The Loveland community enjoys an abundance of proximate natural features, in the form of private, local, state, and federally managed parks, open lands, trails, and environmental programs. Unfortunately, portions of the community must overcome significant economic and environmental barriers in order to enjoy these resources. This project will address the barriers faced by the youth and families situated in the southeast quadrant of Loveland, which limit the opportunities for positive experiences with nature. This community contains numerous environmental hazards and has higher rates of poverty and racial diversity than much of the rest of Loveland. The population of this area is projected to grow at a rapid rate, and contains numerous opportunities to better facilitate connections with the Big Thompson River Corridor.

Throughout the planning process, the Coalition collaborated with youth, educators, and members of this community to identify barriers and create solutions. These barriers included access concerns, such as a missing multi-modal connectivity options that could safely connect schools and neighborhoods with open spaces and parks. Another significant barrier was the economic cost of transportation, gear, and programming, which limited opportunities to connect with nature. A third barrier was a lack of programming that addressed outdoor skills and knowledge for all ages, as well as a lack of awareness of programs offered in the area. Addressing these concerns through the Inspire initiative will allow youth and families in southeast Loveland to safely access existing natural areas, provide new, proximate opportunities for outdoor recreation and

exploration, create new opportunities for educators to implement nature in their curriculums, provide engaging environmental programming for all ages, and create natural resource career development opportunities.

The Loveland Places Plan includes many enhancements which will improve connectivity, access to the outdoors, and programming opportunities. These include a 2 mile off-street trail, which addresses many of the connectivity issues identified as a barrier in this community. Many of the places improvements in this project involve the newly acquired, 80-acre Willow Bend Natural Area, which is located in the project area adjacent to the project hub: The Loveland Boys & Girls Club. These improvements will allow convenient access to the outdoors for those in southeast Loveland and provide numerous programming opportunities, including an outdoor adventure area, mountain bike flow trails, bike skills features, a fishing dock, wetland education walk and recreation trails. The Loveland places plan also includes improvements to Winona Elementary School, which is located in the project area, including infrastructure upgrades that allow safe pedestrian access to nearby open lands, which addresses connectivity concerns identified by the community. Other places improvements, such as a garden area, an outdoor classroom/picnic shelter, crusher-fine trails, and playground resurfacing will allow elementary educators to implement nature in their curriculums despite the barriers of transportation and funding.

The Loveland Programs Plan will seek to connect children of all ages to the outdoors in ways that encourage a transition from backyard to backcountry as experiences grow. The programs aspect of this project will rely on assistance from local public and private program providers, including Loveland Open Lands Division, Colorado Youth Outdoors, Heart-J Center for Experiential Learning at Sylvan Dale Ranch, Overland Mountain Bike Club, High Plains Environmental Center, and Loveland Youth Gardeners. The scaffolding of this programming will naturally transition children from more familiar, urban natural areas to more remote backcountry settings as they grow in age and experience.

Kindergarteners through 2nd graders will be offered programming at or near their school grounds, while 3rd and 4th graders will be offered programming at nearby city natural areas. By 5th grade, students will be offered programming at the City of Loveland's Viestenz-Smith Mountain Park, Devil's Backbone Open Space and Sylvan Dale Ranch, and older youth will progress to the more remote reaches of Sylvan Dale Ranch. The experiences at these programming opportunities will promote exciting engagement with the natural world that develops values while promoting curriculum goals of educators and offering inclusive family participation.

The Loveland Pathways Plan will provide opportunities for students of all ages and backgrounds to understand, explore, and participate in natural resource careers. This goal will be achieved through partnerships with schools, colleges, employers and public agencies in Larimer County. Middle and high school students will be introduced to natural resource careers during career days and outdoor career exploration events at schools in the project area and at Sylvan Dale Ranch. Students can begin to develop natural resource-related skills and knowledge in middle school by participating in the Larimer County Conservation Corps (LCCC) AgriCorps program, and EduCorps, which provides part-time service learning opportunities for youth aged 14-16 in Larimer County, which will be promoted through funding grants. The High Plains Environmental Center and Loveland Open Lands Department will collaborate with Front Range Community College and Mountain View High School to provide internship positions for older youth. LCCC provides additional natural resource employment opportunities for 16-21 year olds through their Energy Audit and Sawyer programs. These pathway opportunities offer youth from middle school through college age in Loveland the ability to develop career skills, cultivate stewardship values, and earn an income.

The Coalition believes that the barriers to connecting with the outdoors identified by youth and families in the southeast quadrant of Loveland will be alleviated by these improvements to places, programs and pathways.





Youth Advisory Council Members at initial Public Meeting: Jan 24, 2017

PLANNING OPPORTUNITY + PURPOSE

The theme of the 2015 Loveland Comprehensive Plan is “enhancing community resiliency”. Connecting youth to nature, providing them with opportunities to explore and interact with natural settings, will hopefully instill a respect for the land and its myriad rewards. Creating an environment for people to interact with nature at a young age will help to create a community that is truly resilient and one that will continue to thrive.

The Plan also states that community resiliency “involves activities such as supporting the health of natural systems like rivers and air...”. It is in this spirit of endurance that the Loveland community has embarked on a planning effort for the GOCO Inspire Initiative.

While more people are moving to cities along the Front Range, it is important to

keep people connected to the natural beauty and “great outdoors” that exist throughout Colorado.

The goals of Project Outdoors are:

- To **understand** the specific barriers youth and families experience preventing them from connecting to the outdoors;
- To **identify** strategies to address the disconnects; and
- To **empower** youth and the community to be part of a collective effort to remove or alleviate these barriers.

The planning process (January 2016 - July 2017) will be followed by the opportunity to apply for \$1-3 million in implementation funds from Great Outdoors Colorado.

Project Outdoors is led by a Youth Advisory Council of Boys & Girls Club members and a Coalition of agency partners including Larimer County Department of Natural Resources, the City of Loveland, Larimer County Boys & Girls Club, Colorado State University and Thompson School District.

PLANNING PROCESS HIGHLIGHTS + CHALLENGES

HIGHLIGHTS

The planning process encouraged collaboration with a number of local stakeholders, which created a unique set of highlights and challenges for our Coalition. Collaborating with local and regional partners to create a Coalition allowed us to work with other professionals to meet our common goals, and exposed us to new ideas, methods, and programs. Working with program providers allowed us to understand and promote the unique opportunities available within the Loveland community.

Engaging with the community in public meetings and online surveys provided a chance to gather their input on desires, barriers, and needs, which informed decisions for the GOCO Inspire project and will continue to influence future projects. These public meetings also gave us an opportunity to demonstrate some of the offerings that our Coalition provides for the community and our constituents. Working with local youth offered a fresh perspective on the barriers faced by youth in our community, and their input was a constant motivator throughout the planning process. The thoughtful and creative input they offered informed plans throughout the entire process, and their participation was invaluable.

Working with educators and schools allowed us to better understand and address the unique needs and issues faced by teachers and administrators in our community. The teachers were very grateful and enthusiastic about being directly involved in the process, as working through district channels can be cumbersome and time-consuming and this stream-lined process connected teachers directly to planners and potential funding sources. We were grateful to have support and input from such a

knowledgeable and motivated group of professionals.

These collaborations permitted our Coalition to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the concerns, issues, and desires of a broad cross-section of the Loveland population. The inclusive approach allowed us to develop new relationships with groups that are traditionally not heavily involved in planning processes, such as youth, program providers, and teachers. The process also offered the opportunity and motivation to partner with program providers, educators at all levels, and other agencies and departments to develop a comprehensive framework for providing nature-related programming and outdoor opportunities for youth and families.

This effort has been discussed for years to reduce redundancies and inefficiencies in northern Colorado, but support to develop such a system was not available previous to the GOCO Inspire Initiative. The funding provided by GOCO for this planning effort jump-started the conversation and made this exciting and inspiring collaboration possible, involving many organizations and individuals who will eventually facilitate and benefit from this project.

CHALLENGES

Coordinating with this large network of stakeholders and partners presented logistical and practical challenges throughout the planning process as well. Prior to the Inspire planning process, there was not a central location or unified group representing the neighborhoods within in the planning area. We utilized marketing methods including press releases, online postings, and putting posters up in schools and public centers to announce upcoming community meetings, but it was still difficult to target the specific neighborhoods most impacted by this project.

Working with the Loveland Boys & Girls Club as the programmatic hub helped us better reach the neighborhood and community within the planning area. Its membership represents a large portion of the youth in the southeast Loveland community, so the club has the resources and credibility to communicate with the stakeholders that stand to benefit most from this project.

The input of and participation by members of the Youth Advisory Council were extremely valuable to the process, but we struggled with participation and retention of members throughout the planning process due to students having other extracurricular conflicts and interests.

Collaborating with teachers also presented a difficult logistical task as they were already extremely busy, especially towards the end of the school year. We adapted by holding short meetings with teachers directly after school, which limited the amount of feedback and input provided. Other methods of reaching out to teachers, such as online surveys, proved only slightly more effective.

Program providers were also very busy and had limited resources to collaborate, so we had to be flexible in our approach in order to involve everyone.

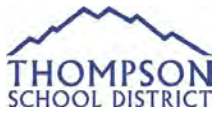
These challenges ultimately presented occasions for us to better understand our stakeholders' needs and values, as well as opportunities for us to improve our outreach methods for future projects.

While there were difficulties, the benefits and outcomes of the planning process far outweighed the challenges that arose during the development of the plan.



Teachers Meeting: February 9, 2017

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



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DESIGNWORKSHOP



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From your backyard to the backcountry:
Nature experiences are possible everywhere



Backyard



Natural Area or Park



Backcountry



Backyard



Backyard



Backyard



Backyard



Backyard



Backyard



Backyard



Backyard



Backyard



Backyard



Backyard



Backyard



Backyard



Backyard



Backyard



Backyard



Backyard



Backyard

People

LOVELAND COMMUNITY
CONTEXT

SOCIO-ECONOMIC INDICATORS





Pathways: LCCC Crew Fence Build

LOVELAND COMMUNITY CONTEXT

The Loveland community is located approximately 45 miles north of Denver, in Larimer County. The city's total area is approximately 25.5 square miles, located just east of the mouth of the Big Thompson River. In 2014, the estimated population, according to the US Census, was 72,651. The city is part of the Front Range Urban Corridor, a region located along the eastern face of the Southern Rocky Mountains. Located along US Highway 34 to the west, Rocky Mountain National Park and Estes Park are easily accessible from Loveland.

Loveland and Fort Collins are considered a single metropolitan area. While the cities are linked in many ways, each has its own distinct identity.

Loveland was founded in 1866 along a line of the Colorado Central Railroad. For many years, agriculture was the main source of work and income. Sugar beets and sour cherries were the primary crops.

In the late 20th century, manufacturing arrived in Loveland, including large companies like Hewlett-Packard. The Medical Center of the Rockies is also located in the city.

Today, "Lovelanders" enjoy a diverse community, live near the Big Thompson River and are surrounded by open space. While nature is not far away, the urban areas in the city are older and lack close to home opportunities to access nature.

NEIGHBORHOOD TO BE SERVED

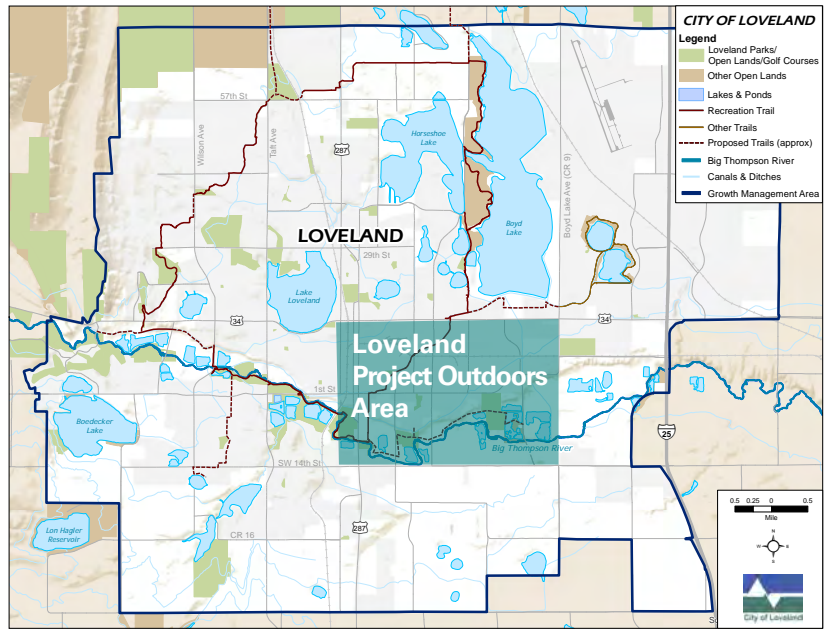
The large map on the facing page highlights the focus area of this planning effort, which is located in the southeast quadrant of Loveland. The map includes the locations of schools, the Boys & Girls Club, parks, recreation centers and natural areas.

Southeast Loveland, as a community, contains a racially diverse population with lower incomes when compared with the rest of the city. The lower socio-

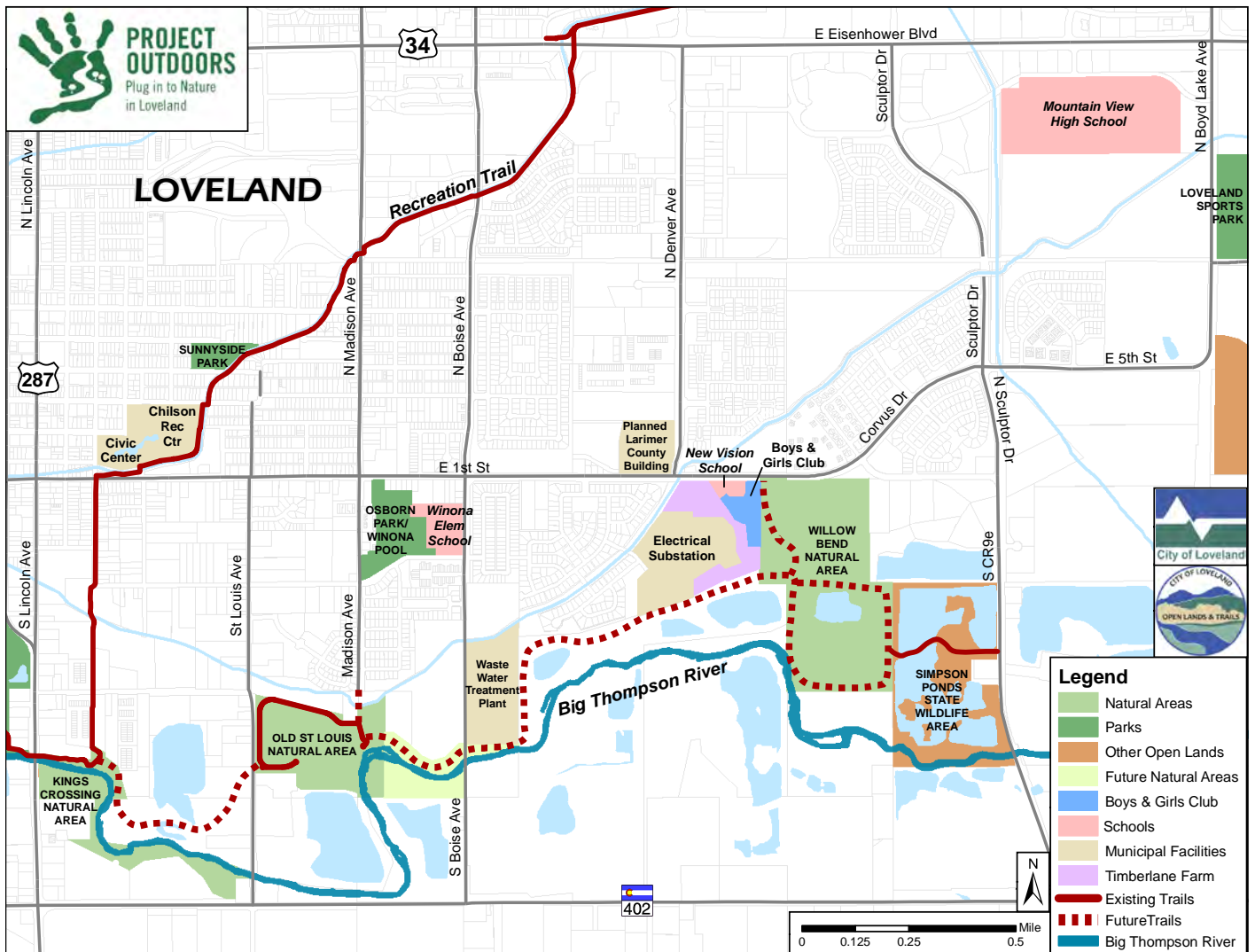
economic status, combined with the existence of numerous environmental hazards and indications of substantial future population growth, show that youth and families of this community are in need of additional opportunities to connect with nature.

Furthermore, the Big Thompson River Corridor, which represents the southern border of the project area, presents numerous opportunities for proximate educational and recreational connections to a beautiful and diverse ecosystem, if access is provided.

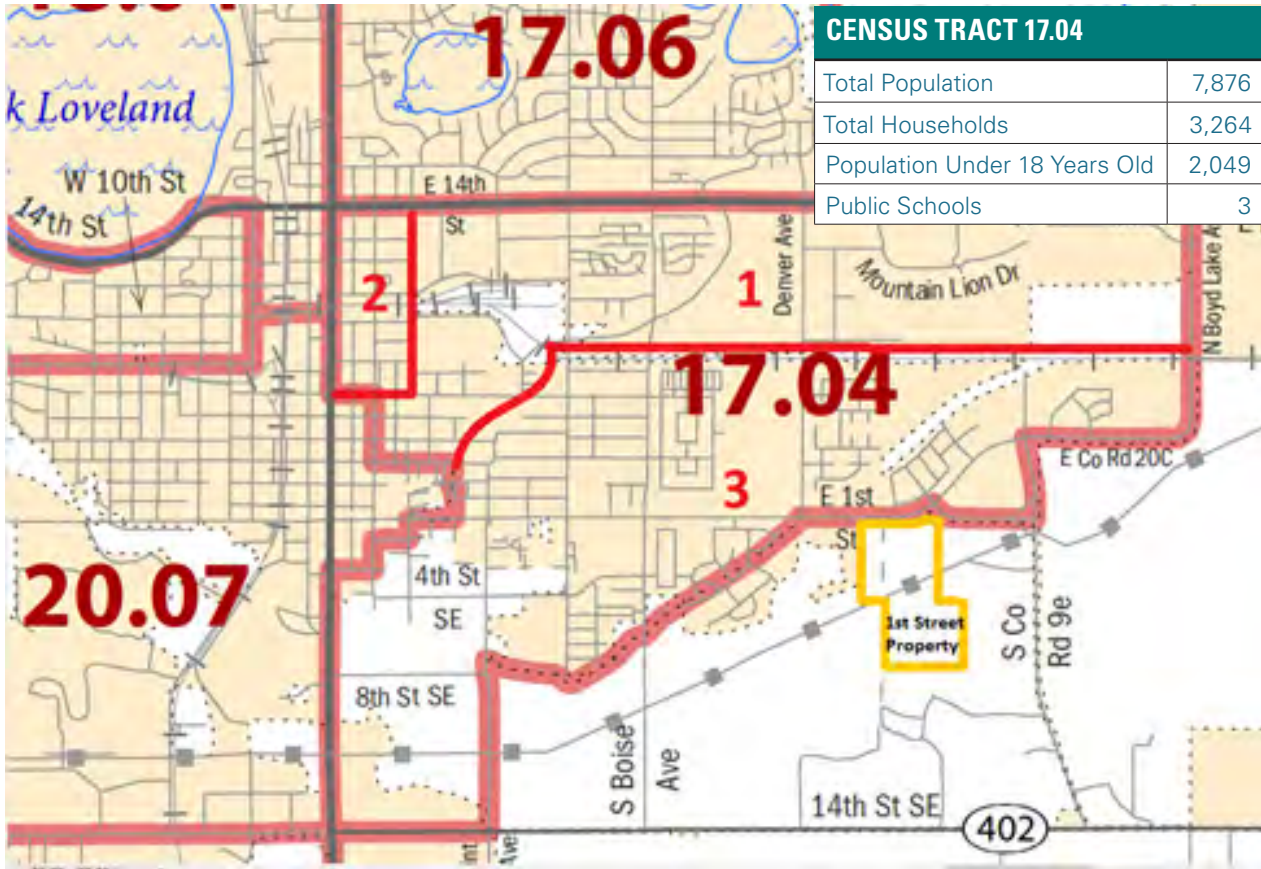
CITY OF LOVELAND



LOVELAND PROJECT OUTDOORS AREA MAP



Project Outdoors Area Map



CENSUS TRACT 17.04	
Total Population	7,876
Total Households	3,264
Population Under 18 Years Old	2,049
Public Schools	3

Project Outdoors Area Census Tracts

SOCIO-ECONOMIC INDICATORS

PROJECT AREA

This area of Loveland is compelling because of the presence of large and growing underserved populations and the proximity to the Big Thompson River Corridor and numerous natural areas that lack safe, convenient access. Environmental hazards, which include oil and gas developments, gravel mining operations, and other industrial activities, also have a higher than average impact in this quadrant of the city.

The project area contains a population with generally lower incomes, less English proficiency, and higher percentages of minority populations when compared with other areas of Loveland, Larimer County, and the State of Colorado. The population is projected to grow at a much faster rate than the rest of the city over the next decade, which will likely continue to strain schools,

infrastructure, and access to natural areas in Southeast Loveland.

The entire project area is defined generally as the 1704 US Census Tract, with Sections 1, 2, and 3 representing the northern, northwestern, and southern portions of the area, respectively.

POPULATION

The project area contains a population of 7,876, or approximately 9.5% of the entire city’s population. It is expected to grow at a rate of 2.75% over the next 5 years, well above the 1.9% average for the rest of the city.

RACE DEMOGRAPHICS

Race demographics of the project area indicate a higher percentage of minority populations than the city average. Loveland’s white, non-Hispanic population makes up 85% of the overall populace. The remaining 15% of the city

is comprised of Hispanics (12%), Blacks (0.6%) Native Americans (0.8%) and Asian/Pacific Islanders (1%). In contrast, the entire project area is comprised of 78% White, 18% Hispanic, and less than 1% of Black, Native American, and Asian/Pacific Islander populations. Within the project area, the southern and northern portions contain more racial diversity, including higher percentages of Hispanics at 21% and 22%, respectively. This is nearly double the Hispanic population percentages found elsewhere in Loveland.

Additionally, 27% of the entire project area has Hispanic or Latino origins, more than double the city average. This disproportionate rate may exist because this area was established around the Great Western Sugar Factory, where Hispanic/Latinos and other immigrants provided the labor for sugar beet harvesting.

INCOME + HOME VALUES

This data indicates that the population in the project area has a lower socio-economic status than other parts of Loveland. The Median Household Income in the project area is approximately \$45,000, or about 80% of the city average of \$55,000. The Median Home Value in the project area is approximately \$190,000, which is 37% less than the city average of \$300,000.

Project Area Income + Home Values



\$45,001
Median Household Income

(approximately 80% of city average)

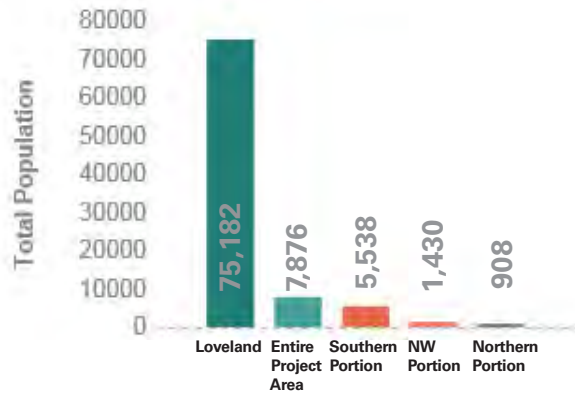
\$21,726
Per Capita Income



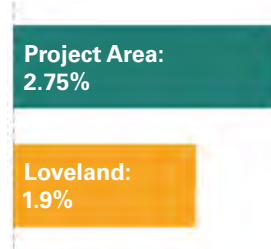
\$190,000
Median Household Value

(approximately 37% less than city average)

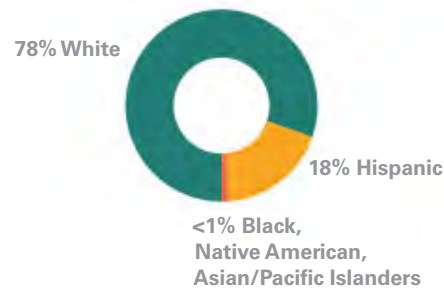
Population Comparison



Estimated Population Growth: 2016 - 2021



Project Area Race Demographics



27%

Hispanic/Latino Origin in Project Area



12%

Hispanic/Latino Origin in Loveland

The figures utilized in this section were gathered from Colorado Department of Education, HUD and US Census databases.

EDUCATION + LANGUAGE

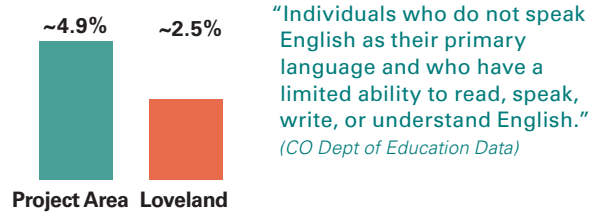
The population within the project area has nearly double the percentage of individuals with limited English Proficiency as compared with the entire city. Limited English Proficiency is defined by the DOE as “Individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English.” Households in the project area spend approximately \$825 annually on education, well below the \$1400 spent annually on average by households in Loveland. This data indicates youth in the project area have fewer educational opportunities and more obstacles to success than peers in other areas of the city.

NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOLS

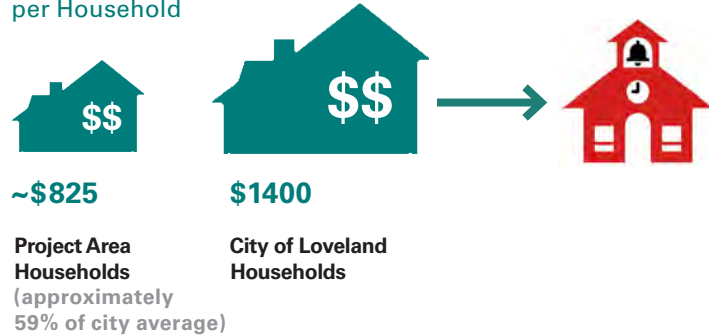
Southeast Loveland contains 5 public schools, two of which are charter schools. A total of 3,035 students attend public school in the area. The non-charter schools in the region, which represent 2,100+ students, have higher percentages of students receiving free and reduced lunch and contain more racial diversity than state or district averages. For example, Winona Elementary School has 67.2% of pupils enrolled in free and reduced lunch programs and Conrad Ball Middle School has 52.4%, well above the state average of 42%. At Winona, 35.3% of students are Hispanic, above state and district averages.

The school yards at these public schools have numerous safety issues and the area is missing important pedestrian infrastructure features which limit connectivity, and prevent educators from implementing outdoor education lessons or providing other opportunities with nature on campus or at nearby public

Limited English Proficiency

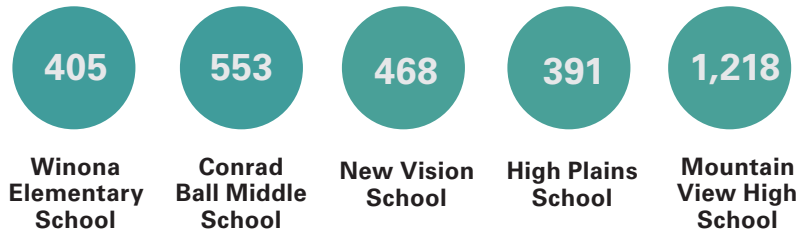


Money Spent Annually on Education per Household



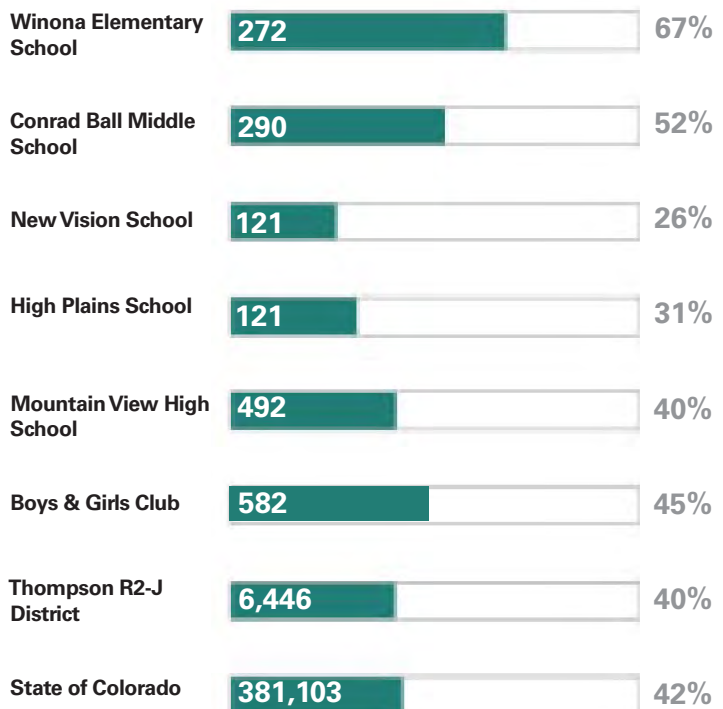
Project Area School Counts

3,035 TOTAL STUDENTS



Percentage of Pupils (PK-12) Receiving Free + Reduced Lunch

(CO Dept of Education Data)



areas. For example, Winona Elementary cannot use much of its grassy school yard because fencing is inadequate, reducing available play areas to concrete basketball courts and wood chipped playgrounds designed for older children.

BOYS & GIRLS CLUB

The Southeast Loveland community houses the Loveland's Boys & Girls Club, which has 1,305 registered members from schools throughout southern

Loveland, 45% of whom are enrolled in free and reduced lunch programs. The demographics of the club's members indicate higher racial diversity than city averages, including 21% identifying as Hispanic and nearly 10% of members identifying as 2 or more races.



WINONA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL:

- **405 students**
 - » 35.3% Hispanic
 - » 57% White
 - » 2.7% African American
 - » 0.2% Asian
 - » 4.4% 2+ races
 - » 0.2% American Indian or Alaskan Native
 - » 0% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander

CONRAD BALL MIDDLE SCHOOL:

- **553 students**
 - » 25.6% Hispanic
 - » 66.9% White
 - » 2.16% African American
 - » 1.4% Asian
 - » 3% 2+ races
 - » 0% American Indian or Alaskan Native
 - » 0% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander

NEW VISION SCHOOL:

- **468 students**
 - » 14.1% Hispanic
 - » 81% White
 - » 0.2% African American
 - » 0.9% Asian
 - » 3.4% 2+ races
 - » .4% American Indian or Alaskan Native
 - » 0% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander

HIGH PLAINS SCHOOL:

- **391 students**
 - » 16% Hispanic
 - » 75% White
 - » 2% African American
 - » 1% Asian
 - » 5% 2+ races
 - » .77% American Indian or Alaskan Native
 - » .26% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander

MOUNTAIN VIEW HIGH SCHOOL:

- **1,218 students**
 - » 26% Hispanic
 - » 68% White
 - » 2% African American
 - » 1% Asian
 - » 2% 2+ races
 - » .41% American Indian or Alaskan Native
 - » 0% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander

BOYS & GIRLS CLUB:

- **1,305 registered club members**
 - » 21% Hispanic
 - » 65% White
 - » 1.70% African American
 - » 1.15% Asian
 - » 9.5% 2+ races
 - » .54% American Indian or Alaskan Native
 - » 0% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander

School data: CO Dept of Education

Boys & Girls Club data: Boys & Girls Clubs of Larimer County 2016-2017.



Youth Advisory Group Field Trip

Planning

COALITION MEMBERS

- Coalition Context
- Youth Advisory Council: Advisors + Assignments

PLANNING PROCESS

- Process Goals + Opportunities
- Outreach Events Summary
- Outreach Event Descriptions + Findings



Coalition Core Team Members

COALITION

COALITION CONTEXT

The Larimer Inspire Coalition in Loveland included a range of stakeholders, i.e. local and regional government agencies, community organizations and the local school district. Each member of the Coalition contributed unique perspectives and provided invaluable resources to the planning process. This group met several times throughout the planning process

PRIMARY POINT OF CONTACT

The City of Loveland Parks and Recreation Department served as the Coalition's primary point of contact. Within the Loveland Parks and Recreation Department, representatives from the Open Lands, Parks, and Planning Divisions collaborated throughout the process to efficiently utilize a diverse skill set. The department currently manages 28 Natural Areas, 32 Parks, and 19 miles of recreation trail throughout the city and provides environmental education opportunities to thousands of children

and adults in the community. The department worked directly with the Youth Advisory Council to involve them throughout the planning process and ensure their feedback was included at Coalition meetings. Debbie Eley, Michele Van Hare, Marilyn Hilgenberg, Kelly Smith, and Andy Frothingham represented the department within the Coalition.

The core team served as facilitators and listeners for this community-driven process. They gathered bi-weekly to discuss progress, identify next steps, and to make prioritization decisions. In addition, the group focused on the topics of places, programs, career pathways, and youth engagement. They met regularly to advance the planning process, meet individually with stakeholders and program providers, and developed ideas for the grant application.

COALITION PARTICIPANTS

The Larimer County Department of Natural Resources provided a regional perspective and significant resources for the Coalition. The department manages open spaces and parks throughout the county, providing numerous opportunities to connect youth and families with nature. The department operates a robust public outreach and environmental education program for the northern Colorado region. Heather Young and Kerri Rollins represented the department within the Coalition.

The Boys & Girls Club of Larimer County serves as the hub for the project, and was an important contributor to the Coalition. The Loveland Club serves over 1,300 children, and has demonstrated significant interest in better connecting its members with the outdoors. Kaycee Headrick and Andy Abbott served as representatives for the club at Coalition meetings, Youth Advisory Council meetings and field trips, and public outreach planning efforts.

Thompson R2-J School District was another valuable Coalition member. The district serves over 16,000 students in Loveland and the surrounding communities of Berthoud, Masonville, and Drake. Various administrators participated in Coalition planning efforts, including the district superintendent and representatives from academic and facilities departments. The district strongly supports the Larimer Inspire Coalition's mission to connect students to nature and the outdoors through curriculum, site development, programs, and pathways to careers. Administrators provided support by identifying and explaining existing barriers and evaluating the feasibility of proposed solutions. The district was able to provide the Coalition with valuable data and access to stakeholders which allowed us to better understand the constraints and opportunities within our community. Stan Scheer, Margaret Crespo, Matthew Throop, Zach Chambers, Kelly Lockner, and Anne Marie Sanchez participated in

a variety of stakeholder meetings and outreach events as representatives of the school district.

The Larimer County Conservation Corps (LCCC) was also a key member of the Coalition and provided unique insights and contributions to the Pathways component of the Coalition's efforts. The Corps promotes individual development through service for the benefit of the environment and community. LCCC is based in Fort Collins, housed within and administered by the Larimer County Workforce Center, and accredited through the Colorado Youth Corps Association. The goals of LCCC are to promote self-sufficiency in youth and young adults through skill development for personal and professional growth, increase participant's knowledge and awareness of community and environmental issues through education and service learning, and complete meaningful and long lasting conservation projects in Northern Colorado. The Corps empowers its members to become environmental stewards, while developing self-sufficiency and work preparation skills to help them become productive members of our community. LCCC currently operates four programs for youth and young adults ranging in age from 14 to 24. Maelly Oropeza represented the Corps within the Coalition.

The Coalition met on a regular basis to collaborate, share resources and knowledge, discuss timelines, delegate responsibilities and make prioritization decisions. The Coalition also created subgroups that met with other relevant stakeholders to discuss specific aspects of the project including places, programs, and pathways. The Coalition communicated regularly to ensure timelines were met, objectives were understood, and new findings or developments were relayed.

KEY COMMUNITY SUPPORTERS

A number of local organizations provided outstanding community support throughout this planning process.

HIGH PLAINS ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER (HPEC)

The City of Loveland enjoys a unique partnership with the High Plains Environmental Center (HPEC), who assisted and supported the Coalition throughout the planning process. HPEC is a non-profit agency and community leader that demonstrates, through extensive gardens, exhibits and programming, the benefits to wildlife and water conservation derived from the use of native plants in landscaping, open space, and urban stormwater ponds, and works to educate local communities and neighborhoods to adopt and implement sustainable land use practices in the midst of development. With financial support from the city and other donors and supporters, HPEC recently opened their new purpose-built facility, after nearly 15 years operating out of a model home. HPEC collaborates with the city to assist with management and restoration of open lands and natural areas by sharing their expertise and knowledge in native plants and ecosystems, as well as providing low or no-cost plant materials for city restoration projects. HPEC helped build momentum during the planning process by providing a forum for community input at the grand opening of their new facility in May (resulting in feedback from 140+ people). HPEC also promoted public outreach events during the planning process and is participating as a program provider.

SCHOOL DISTRICT

This grant process opened up new discussions and opportunities for collaborating with Loveland's school district. Staff and educators from Thompson School District also created substantial community support for the project. District staff and school administrators promoted the Coalition's public meetings and educator input

sessions and encouraged direct involvement by their teachers, students and families. In addition, the principal of Winona Elementary School initiated and implemented school-wide surveys to solicit input from the school community about desired outdoor improvements to the Winona campus as a neighborhood resource. By allowing the Coalition to present at school events, the school district offered us an opportunity to explain the project directly to community members and obtain important feedback and suggestions. Without this support, it would have been very difficult to reach out directly to such a large group of stakeholders without expending significantly more resources.

OVERLAND MOUNTAIN BIKE CLUB

The Overland Mountain Bike Club was also a notable supporter of the project. Representatives from the club met multiple times with Coalition members during the planning process to offer suggestions on park design and budget, as well as adapt programming to the needs of the community. The club represents a large group of local volunteers, who have generously offered to donate labor and expertise in order to create new opportunities for Loveland's youth and families. The group encouraged its members to attend public meetings and provide their input, allowing us to gather more community feedback. The club currently has no direct involvement in Loveland, but this project has opened a door for future collaborations.



Mehaffey Park Compass - Public Artwork



Youth Advisory Council Field Trip #

YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL: ADVISORS + ASSIGNMENTS

The Loveland Youth Advisory Council is comprised of more than a dozen local school children, from middle to high school ages, from numerous schools within the Thompson R2-J School District. Several are also members of the Boys & Girls Club. The group met with the Coalition approximately once a month from November 2016 through May 2017 to offer youth perspectives on barriers and opportunities, provide project ideas and inspiration, give feedback on proposed plans, solicit input from their peers, and play an important role in prioritizing options.

FIELD TRIPS

The group also attended several relevant field trips organized by the Coalition. The initial field trip included visits to a series of parks and open spaces ranging from developed to natural, as examples of a variety of public access options and features.

The group also visited High Plains Environmental Center where they learned how native habitat restoration can be incorporated into urban and suburban development.

They next participated in a field trip to Colorado State University's Warner College of Natural Resources and the Fort Collins Museum of Discovery, where they met with professionals and heard presentations relating to natural resource careers. Presenters included the Larimer County Conservation Corps Manager, the CSU Warner College Dean of Students, USFWS Outreach Specialist for the National Black Footed Ferret Conservation Center, and Discovery Museum Director.

The cumulative Youth Advisory Council field trip consisted of an exploration of the new Willow Bend Natural Area with Loveland Open Lands staff in order to create their own designs of the area. They offered unique suggestions

12 YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS REPRESENTING THESE ORGANIZATIONS:

- New Vision School
- Boys & Girls Club
- Loveland High School
- Mountain View High School
- City of Loveland Youth Advisory Commission

YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES:

- Pathways Field Trip #1: 02.21.16
- Parks + Natural Areas Tour & Field Trip #2: 12.06.16
- Site Engagement Field Trip #3: 04.11.17
- 4 YAC Meetings (2016 - 2017)

for features which they felt would encourage youth their age to utilize the site for recreational and social uses, and improvements which would lend themselves to interesting programming or educational opportunities. During the field trip design exercise, they pointed out current barriers that preclude them from connecting with nature, such as a lack of shade in the summer, and suggested pragmatic solutions, such as planting more trees and creating covered shelters.

YOUTH COALITION SITE ENGAGEMENT

To expand youth input in the planning process, the students were each asked to gather additional feedback from their peers regarding suggested places and

YOUTH ADVISORS IN ACTION



Youth Advisory Council Meeting: Nov 16, 2016



Initial Public Meeting: Jan 24, 2017

program improvements, which they did through the use of online polls and classroom surveys. The Youth Advisory Council worked together to develop a comprehensive, final design of the Willow Bend Natural Area that contained the features they suggested which was later used during the prioritization meetings to measure public interest in these proposed features.

This group of youth was instrumental in the planning process, helping gather youth perspectives, helping facilitate meetings and gathering feedback from community members of all ages for this project.

PLANNING PROCESS

PROCESS GOALS + OPPORTUNITIES

The overarching goals of Project Outdoors are:

- » To **understand** the specific barriers youth and families experience that prevent them from fully connecting to the outdoors
- » To **identify** strategies to address this disconnect
- » To **empower** youth and the community to be instrumental in finding ways to get outdoors

The Project Outdoors Loveland planning process, which took place from January 2016 through July 2017, gave the community the opportunity to explore ways to improve connections to nature via places, programs and career pathways.

Community participation and involvement was utilized to identify unique needs, concerns, and opportunities to better connect underserved youth and families in southeast Loveland to the outdoors. The planning process relied on substantial youth and community input, which informed us of the stakeholder population's needs and desires and empowered youth and the community by allowing them to participate throughout each step of the planning process.

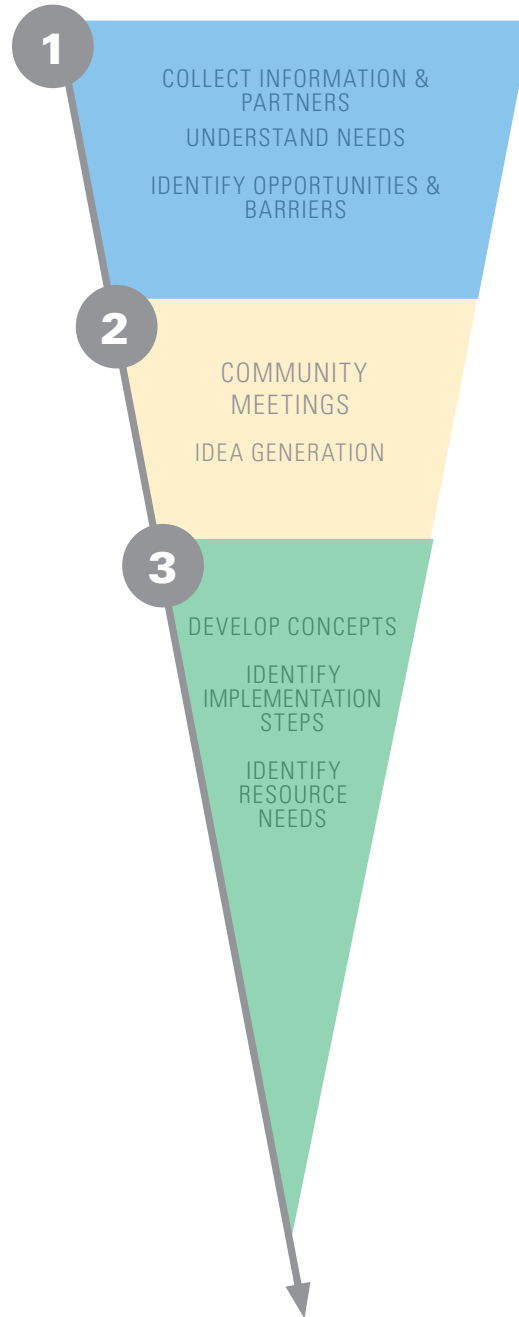
This process will be followed by the opportunity to apply for a \$1-3 million implementation grant from Great Outdoors Colorado, in order to fulfil the conceptual vision and next steps that have been developed.

Creating a Coalition of program providers, convening a Youth Advisory Council and engaging the community were the first steps in the planning process. Once these groups were formed and informed, the following steps were taken:

1. Collecting information and forging partnerships; understanding community needs; identifying barriers

INSPIRE INITIATIVE

*DREAM BIG. REFINE IDEAS.
EMPOWER. PARTNER.*



IMPLEMENTATION INITIATIVE

DETAILED PLANS.
CONSTRUCTION.
NEW OPPORTUNITIES.
PLAY.
EVALUATE.

and opportunities to engaging youth and families in the outdoors.

2. Generating ideas for improvements to places, programs and pathways with the help of the Youth Advisory Council; engaging the community through listening sessions to vet ideas.
3. Developing conceptual plans for improvements to places; developing innovative programs and steps to support existing programs and pathways; identifying implementation steps for places, programs and pathways; identifying resource needs.

OUTREACH EVENTS SUMMARY

A variety of outreach events were organized as part of the planning process. The table to the right provides a description of engagement types, dates of events and numbers of participants.

COMMON THEMES

While each public group involved in this project (YAC, teachers, community members, etc.) identified unique barriers to the outdoors and specific motivations, some common themes did emerge. The top five are listed to the right.

One key set of barriers was cost, including the cost of transportation and gear. Youth and parents, as well as educators, identified the cost of recreational gear such as tents and fishing rods, as a barrier to the outdoors. The cost of outdoor programming was also identified as a barrier by families. Teachers did not feel they had the economic resources to transport students to field trips, even “free” trips to nearby public natural areas.

Along those lines, connectivity emerged as a barrier, as teachers pointed out even proximate parks and natural areas were inaccessible for field trips because of the lack of safe pedestrian infrastructure. Availability of shade and access to restrooms was a barrier identified by both teachers and youth. A lack of outdoor

OUTREACH EVENTS SUMMARY

ENGAGEMENT TYPE	DATE	# OF PARTICIPANTS
Public Meeting/Open House	01.24.2017	~ 75
Local Educators Workshop	02.09.2017	12
Youth Advisory Council Site Engagement	04.11.2017	10
Winona Neighborhood Surveys + Winona Elementary Online Outdoor Improvement Survey	04.21.2017	~45
Winona Carnival Outdoor Improvement Survey	04.26.2017	~70
Public Prioritization Event	05.09.2017	20
High Plains Environmental Center Opening	05.13.2017	140
Winona Elementary School Teachers + Thompson School District Facilities Staff Meeting	05.24.2017	12

COMMON THEMES

- **Better access for people of all abilities is crucial to getting more youth outdoors**
- **Desire for more guided trips and programs**
- **Better connectivity and safer ways to bike and get to natural areas**
- **Active, unguided recreation is important**
- **Traditional recreational activities, e.g. camping, fishing, bike riding, kayaking**

PUBLIC MEETING FEEDBACK

TOP 5 MOTIVATORS THAT INSPIRE PEOPLE TO GET OUTDOORS

- » **Trail exercise**
- » **Natural playgrounds**
- » **Free play with natural elements**
- » **River/stream play**
- » **Traditional recreational activities, e.g. camping, fishing, bike riding, kayaking**

TOP 5 BARRIERS THAT PREVENT PEOPLE FROM GETTING OUTDOORS

- » **Lack of awareness**
- » **Times of day programs offered**
- » **Lack of buses/ transportation**
- » **Location of programs**
- » **Cost of programs**

skills and knowledge was identified as a barrier by families. For example, some parents have never been camping and therefore do not feel comfortable taking their children camping. Finally, youth and families identified a lack of awareness as a primary barrier to program participation. Teachers agreed that the effort required to find and implement outdoor programming with their students was a significant barrier.

Numerous motivators to get outdoors were identified. These include providing proximate locations that allow physical activities like trail exercise, free play, and traditional recreational activities like biking, kayaking, or fishing. Physical features such as natural playgrounds and river play areas also inspired youth and families to get outdoors. Active, unsupervised recreation opportunities like accessible playgrounds, river access, and natural areas for exploration motivated youth and families far more than controlled, less active activities like weather stations and interpretive stations. However, there was significant interest in programming that would teach outdoor skills, such as bike skills and intro to camping clinics.

Addressing these economic barriers, connectivity issues, and lack of program awareness will encourage greater connections to the outdoors. Designing places and programs that allow and encourage freedom to explore, recreate, and learn outdoors will surely inspire more youth participation and interest.

OUTREACH EVENT DESCRIPTIONS + FINDINGS

PUBLIC MEETING

On January 24, an initial public meeting was held at the Loveland Boys & Girls Club to discuss and obtain feedback regarding potential approaches to the GOCO Inspire Initiative. Approximately 75 citizens participated in the open house style meeting, including local youth and adults of all ages, Boys & Girls Club members and parents, and

TEACHER MEETINGS FEEDBACK

MOTIVATORS TO GET OUTDOORS

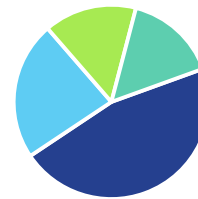
- » Providing natural areas within walking distance of schools or on school grounds
- » Bring programming to schools
- » Gear library

BARRIERS TO GETTING OUTDOORS

- » Transportation
- » Lack of restrooms
- » Common Core Standards (focus on improving standardized test scores)
- » Limited time + scarce resources

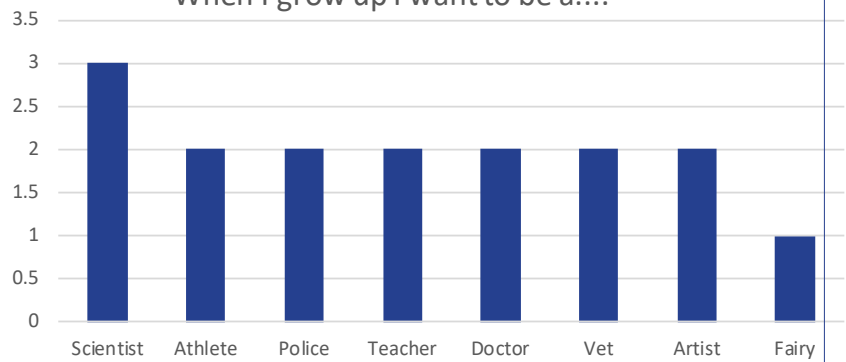
EXAMPLE SURVEY RESULTS

Possible future places to spend time in your neighborhood



- Bike Skills Course
- E 1st St Park/Natural Area/Playground
- Agricultural Places (community garden)
- Natural Areas with interpretive signage, learning stations

When I grow up I want to be a....



Public Meeting Feedback: Jan 24, 2017

other interested community members. Participants offered feedback on features and programs that currently inspire them to get outdoors (or prevent them from doing so), as well as indicate which improvements to places, programs, or pathways would most encourage them to spend more time outside. The Coalition used this data to determine which improvements to further investigate that would best fit the needs and desires of the stakeholders and be appropriate regarding the goals of the grant.

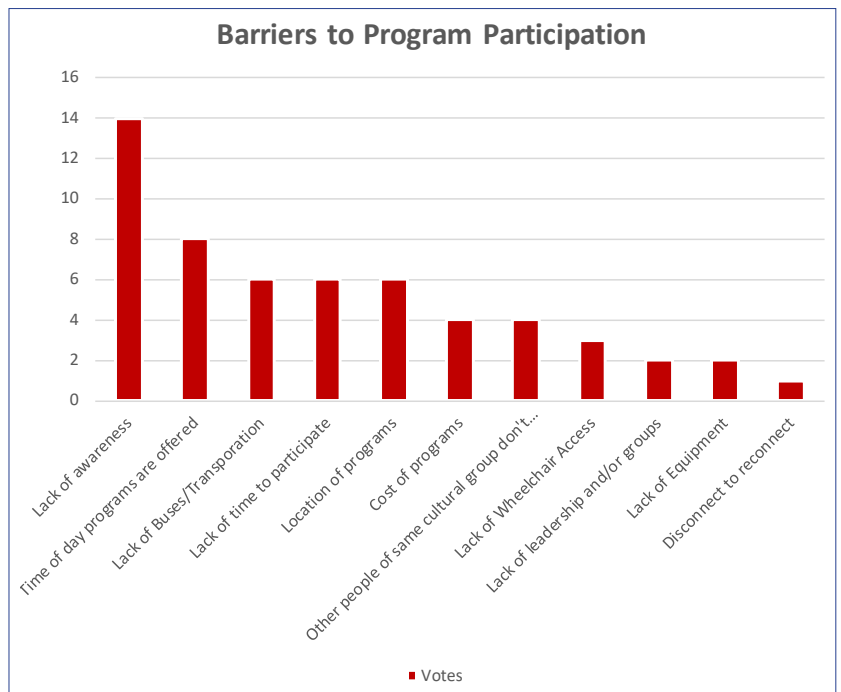
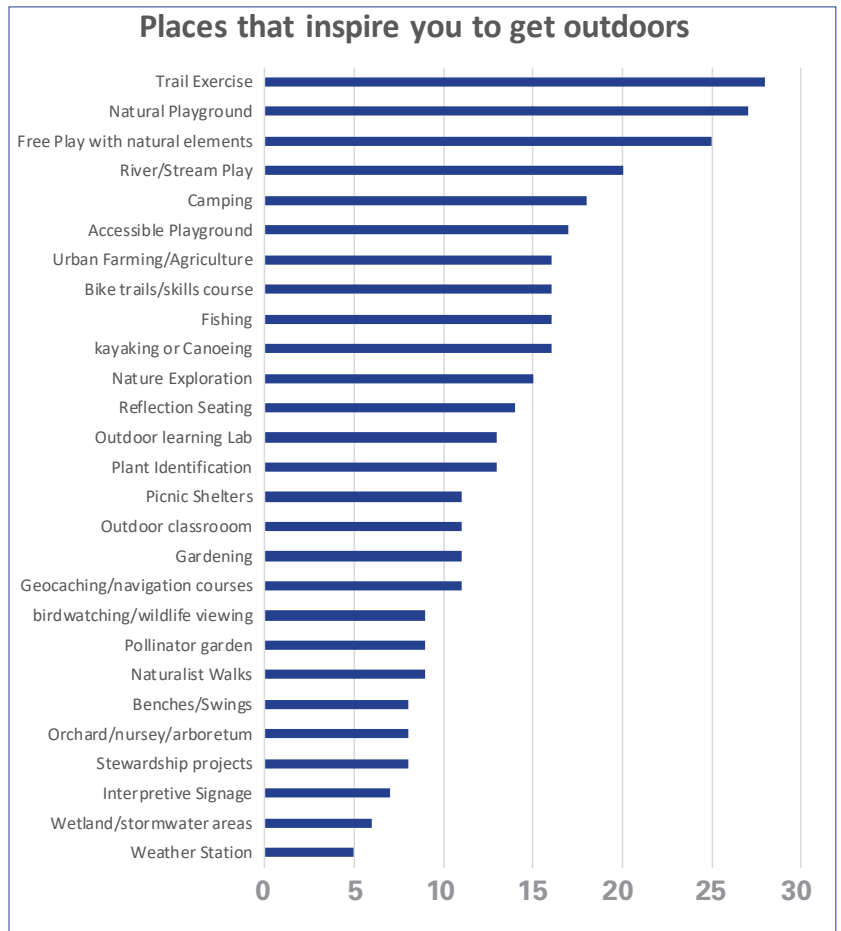
The results reveal substantial interest in certain area improvements and programs, and identify numerous current barriers to access. See Inspire Ideas section for more detail regarding the community's desires for places, programs and pathways, and a description of current conditions and barriers (p. 23). The information gathered at this meeting provides us a general idea of the improvements needed to get Loveland families and youth back into nature.

LOCAL EDUCATORS WORKSHOP

A dozen local educators from the Thompson School District met with the Coalition on February 9, 2017 to offer input on how to better connect kids with the outdoors. Coming from elementary, middle and high school settings, with backgrounds ranging from special education to physical education and specific grade levels, the group of teachers had diverse experiences and were able to identify barriers and solutions that impact a wide range of demographics. The educators were split up into small groups and asked to give their opinion on barriers and opportunities for improvement in Loveland's places, programs and pathways to nature.

Given their diverse experiences and backgrounds, the educators provided unique insights into how to improve programs, places, and pathways to nature in Loveland. Given their potential role in facilitating the goals of GOCO Inspire if properly empowered to do so, their input was critical.

EXAMPLE SURVEY RESULTS



Public Meeting Feedback: Jan 24, 2017

THOMPSON SCHOOL DISTRICT + WINONA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL MEETINGS & SURVEYS

To ensure the planning process was reflective of stakeholder interests and needs, the Coalition also gathered feedback from Thompson School District administration and staff and the Winona Elementary community. The Coalition met with the Winona principal and toured the school property to assess existing conditions and suggest potential outdoor improvements. The principal then initiated an online poll asking respondents to identify barriers and potential improvements that would encourage connecting with nature. After identifying initial ideas, further community feedback was gathered at a school event attended by students and parents on April 21. Over 100 students and parents from the Winona community offered their feedback throughout this process.

The Coalition then met with a dozen Winona School teachers and two district facilities staff members on May 24 to discuss the results of this feedback and how feasible the suggested improvements and programs were from their perspective.

The meeting began with a simple question for the educators: How could outdoor time and experiences at Winona be improved? The educators shared that they felt they could facilitate a greater connection between Winona's students and the outdoors if certain improvements to the school grounds – such as upgraded fencing, an outdoor classroom, a meandering track, a community garden, or a native plant area – were made

PUBLIC PRIORITIZATION MEETINGS

From May 9-13th, the Coalition gathered feedback from public stakeholders at two community events regarding prioritization of potential places, programs, and pathways improvements. Participants were given a set number of votes to express their interest in those improvements they most wanted to see

ENGAGEMENT EVENTS



Initial Public Meeting: Jan 24, 2017



Public Prioritization Meeting: May 9, 2017



Youth Advisory Council Field Trip #2: Dec 6, 2016



Local Teachers Meeting: Feb 9, 2017

PROGRAMS + PATHWAYS EVENTS



Programs: Amphitheatre Talk at Viestenz-Smith Mountain Park



Programs: Elementary Students at River Lab



Pathways: High School Volunteers Arbor Day



Pathways: FRCC High School Interns Teaching

in the Southeast Loveland community. On May 9, the Coalition held an event at the Boys & Girls Club for community members, youth club members, and parents. On May 10, members of the Loveland Open Lands Advisory Council prioritized places, programs and pathways using the same methods. On May 13, the Coalition utilized the same prioritization voting methods to gather feedback at the opening of the new High Plains Environmental Center in Loveland, which resulted in over 140 community members offering prioritization feedback. This data was then compiled and used to inform determinations on which improvements to places, programs, and pathways to prioritize in our application.

OTHER EVENTS/OUTREACH

Winona Elementary Online Outdoor Improvements Survey: In order to gather community and youth feedback regarding potential improvements to Winona Elementary School grounds, Project Outdoors Loveland prepared a simple survey for Winona parents and students to participate in. The survey asked participants to vote for the outdoor improvements they would like to see most. Potential improvements were determined through results of an initial, online-based survey sent to Winona students, parents, and teachers. Out of the 45+ online responses, 8 potential improvements were identified.

Winona Elementary Carnival Outdoor Improvements Survey: Each participant at the Winona Carnival was given 3 votes to distribute among the potential improvements. Approximately 70 Winona students and parents participated in the survey at the Winona Carnival on April 21, 2017.

YAC members attended the Winona Carnival to help solicit feedback from the Winona community on their concepts for outdoor improvements to the school property.

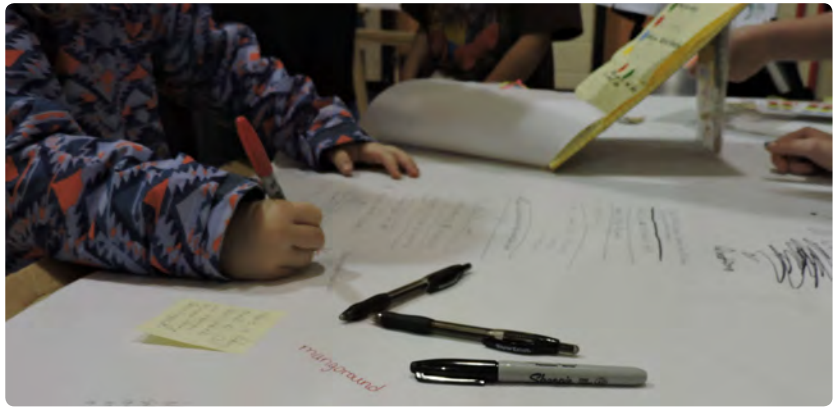
The Loveland Project Outdoors Coalition was able to gather significant public feedback from these events and surveys. In total, nearly 400 local parents, students, teachers and community members offered their feedback and suggestions, which informed the prioritization of these options going forward.

The Places feedback indicates a desire for natural play areas and access, as well as improvements in the connectivity of the area.

The Programs feedback shows interest in summer programming for all ages, and more field trips for elementary students.

The Pathways feedback indicates a desire to develop natural resource career values and job skills year-round at the middle school level, and during the school year for older students. This information will be very useful to help determine which features best meet the needs and budget of the GOCO grant as well as the needs and desires of southeast Loveland's community.

ENGAGEMENT EVENTS



Initial Public Meeting: Jan 24, 2017



Public Prioritization Meeting: May 9, 2017



Youth Advisory Council Field Trip #1: Nov 21, 2016



Red Fox in Loveland



Project Outdoors Loveland

Youth Advisory Council Field Trip #2 – Feb. 21, 2017

ITINERARY

11:30am Depart Boys & Girls Club, 2500 E. 1st St.

Overview of the plan for the day, pass out journals, ask kids to take notes for absent members. Put today's date on the next blank page.

12:00-1:00pm Maelly Oropeza (Lar. Co. Conservation Corps), Room 100 of the Nat Res Bldg, CSU

- Brown bag lunch talk
- Potential internships, jobs and careers in Natural Resources; video

Summary:

Journal topics: How does the Conservation Corps assist in the protection and conservation of natural areas? The Conservation Corps has a variety of crew opportunities for various ages (14-25); what crew would you most want to be on? Name one impression or idea that struck you during this presentation.

1:00-2:00pm Ethan Billingsley (Director of Undergraduate Programs, Warner College of Nat Res), Room 100 of the Nat Res Bldg, CSU

- Natural Resources college programs and careers

Summary:

Journal topics: What different areas of study would help prepare you for college classes in Natural Resources? What areas of natural resource college study sound interesting to you? Name one impression or idea that struck you during this presentation.

2:00-3:00pm Museum of Discovery, 408 Mason Ct, Fort Collins (City to pay \$5/student fee)

- Visit *Natural Areas* and *Wildlands & Wildlife* exhibits

Summary:

Journal topics: How could a trip to this museum help interest fellow students in the outdoors and wildlife? What did you find most interesting while on your "free exploration" time? Name one impression or idea that will stick with you from the displays.

3:00-4:30pm Kimberly Fraser (USFWS Black-footed Ferret Program Coordinator) &

Jason Wolvington (Assoc. Museum Director) at Museum

- Learn about Black-foot Ferret Program and careers in natural resources

Summary:

Journal topics: Do you see any value in preserving/saving endangered species? If yes, what would it be? List a fact or two that you didn't know before this presentation. Do you think this presentation would be of interest to students in your school? What kind of guest presenters do you think your fellow students would be interested in?

4:30pm Depart Museum

Discussion/wrap-up/journaling:

5:00pm Arrive back at Boys & Girls Club



Inspire Ideas

PLACES

- Vision Scope
- Current Conditions
- Barriers + Solutions
- Next Steps for Implementation + Discovery

PROGRAMS

- Opportunities
- Barriers + Solutions

PATHWAYS

- Opportunities
- Barriers + Solutions



Great Horned Owls at Meadowbrook Natural Area

INSPIRE IDEAS

Loveland community members provided their input on Places, Programs and Pathways to connect youth with nature. The results reveal substantial interest in certain area improvements and programs, and identify numerous current barriers to access. People were encouraged to think creatively, but also thoughtfully about how to better connect youth to nature from elementary school through high school and beyond.

A common theme was a desire for more guided trips and programs, whether it be hikes, camping trips, or school field trips to open spaces. This contrasts with a major theme among the places that most inspired people to get outdoors: unguided play and exploration in natural areas. Other notable interests included access to water for fishing and kayaking, outdoor recreation programs such as mountain biking, and urban farming and agriculture.

Among the most popular potential improvements was a bicycle skills course, as well as more trails and better connectivity, to improve bicycle safety throughout the city. Another notable theme that emerged was a need for handicap accessible places, including playgrounds and nature trails. The largest barrier to general access was simply a lack of awareness, which could be reduced through increased marketing and promotion of programs and places. The time and location of programs, as well as transportation options available, were also substantial barriers to access.

The most popular career pathway was protecting the environment, indicating educational programs should utilize professionals that work in related stewardship positions. The information gathered at this meeting provides us a general idea of the improvements needed to get Loveland families and youth back into nature.

While many great ideas were generated, based on community input, the Coalition selected several that have the best chance of being implementable and providing the most immediate connections between youth and nature in Loveland.

PLACES

- Willow Bend Improvements
 - » Outdoor Adventure Area
 - » Bike Skills Features
 - » Fishing Dock
 - » Bike Flow Trails
- Winona School Improvements
- Old St. Louis Natural Area Access Trail
- East Big Thompson River Trail

PROGRAMS + PATHWAYS

- Environmental Education Programming for K-12 Youth
- People Engaged in the Outdoors: A Public + Family Focus
- Outdoor Club (6 - 15 years old)
- Traditional Outdoor Recreation: Train the Leaders + Parents
- 5th Grade Outdoor Education
- 7th Grade Outdoor Education
- Family Adventure Night at Sylvan Dale Ranch
- Native Plant + Restoration Program
- Youth + Family Biking Programs
- Branch Out: Garden Programming for K-12 Youth
- Learn + Share: High School Environmental Education Guides
- Community Stewardship Projects
- Natural Resources Career Fair
- Outdoor Career Exploration Events
- AgriCorps Program
- EduCorps Program
- Career Pathways in Natural Resources + Landscape Design Internships

CURRENT CONDITIONS | WILLOW BEND NATURAL AREA



PLACES

Build and enhance trails, access, and community hubs to get kids safely from their homes and into parks, natural areas and other public lands in order to cultivate curiosity and confidence.

WILLOW BEND IMPROVEMENTS

VISION SCOPE

Willow Bend was acquired in May 2016 and planning for public access to this 79-acre site has been prioritized and accelerated during the Inspire planning process to provide natural area and trail access currently lacking in southeast Loveland. The property is adjacent to the Boys & Girls Club, New Vision Charter School, and Simpson Ponds State Wildlife Area, and includes a 4-acre pond and Big Thompson River frontage. The property was purchased using city Open Lands and Parks funds and a cash match from the High Plains Foundation, funding arm of the High Plains Environmental Center (HPEC).

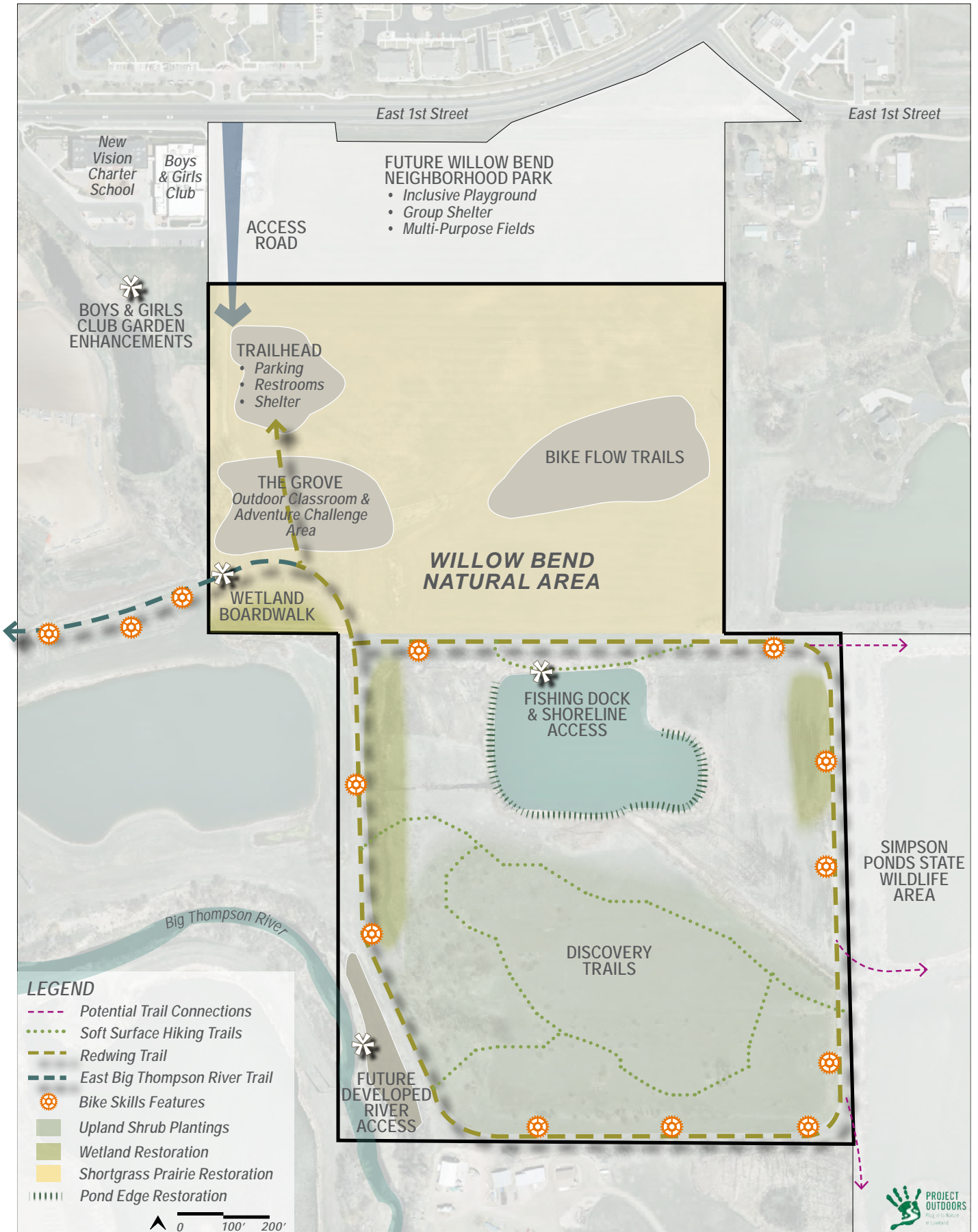
The majority of the property (65-70 acres) will be restored and developed with amenities for passive, low-impact outdoor recreation uses, including natural surface trails, parking, picnic shelters, restrooms, accessible fishing dock, and habitat restoration and enhancement (see Willow Bend Improvements map). Bike flow trails and skills features and an outdoor adventure challenge area are also proposed to be located at Willow Bend as separate Places components. Approximately 10-15 acres of the site will be developed for neighborhood park purposes, including a playground, play fields, and group picnic shelter. Amenities will be shared by the park and natural area where possible, such as sidewalk improvements, vehicle access, restrooms and possibly parking. A paved entry road will be constructed to provide access to Willow Bend as well as to alleviate transportation issues at the adjacent New Vision Charter School. New Vision

will partner with a cash match to enable this cooperative effort. A new 24-car recycled-asphalt parking lot (including 3 ADA spaces) will be shared by the city, New Vision and Boys & Girls Club as needed during school, club and natural area/park events. Two picnic shelters are planned at the natural area – one combined with the restroom and storage area near the parking lot/trailhead, and the other a standalone feature at The Grove outdoor classroom. Both can be used for picnicking, shade, group gatherings and programming.

Areas for outdoor learning and adventure, nature contemplation and exploration, fishing and biking will be connected by a network of crusher fine trails (6,400 LF) throughout the site and connecting to Simpson Ponds State Wildlife Area and the East Big Thompson River Trail. A floating dock and shoreline access will provide accessible opportunities for fishing at the pond. Ongoing restoration of upland and wetland areas will improve wildlife habitat and offer numerous possibilities for learning, programming, and stewardship activities.

A variety of programs and events will be offered for youth, families, Boys & Girls Club members, school groups, and the public by Loveland Open Lands, High Plains Environmental Center, Loveland Youth Gardeners, Colorado Youth Outdoors, Overland Mountain Bike Club, and Colorado Parks & Wildlife. Opportunities will include educational field trips for school groups, guided walks and hikes, volunteer stewardship projects, citizen science research, and outdoor skills clinics for biking, fishing, orienteering and survival. The High Plains Environmental Center will provide discounted native plant materials for

WILLOW BEND NATURAL AREA IMPROVEMENTS



Concept Map: Willow Bend Natural Area

wetland and upland restoration projects, along with expertise to assist with management and stewardship of the site.

Willow Bend is located on E. 1st Street, a major arterial, and is accessible via sidewalks, bike lanes and crosswalks. The sidewalk improvements proposed as part of this project will provide additional safe access for residents to the east. It is directly adjacent to the Boys & Girls Club and New Vision Charter School for safe, off-street access, and less than 0.4 mile from Winona Elementary School, allowing walk-in access for older grades attending field trip programs. The East Big Thompson River Trail proposed as part of this application will also provide off-street trail access for pedestrians, bikes and strollers when built.

CURRENT CONDITIONS

The site currently consists of approximately 35 acres of cultivated alfalfa and 40 acres of reclaimed wetland and upland habitats resulting from gravel mining.

BARRIERS + SOLUTIONS

Willow Bend will provide a variety of new opportunities for outdoor recreation, education, natural areas learning and immersion to residents in southeast Loveland and the entire community. Access to open lands and additional trails were two of the highest priorities identified by citizens in the city's 2014 Parks & Recreation Master Plan. Trails within this new 79-acre site will also be connected to Simpson Ponds State Wildlife Area and the Big Thompson River corridor, providing safe off-street connections to the natural area throughout southeast Loveland. Programming planned for this trail includes environmental education field trips, group bike rides and skills clinics, traditional outdoor recreation clinics, native pollinator gardening programs, and a variety of guided walks and other programs for youth and families.

NEXT STEPS FOR IMPLEMENTATION + DISCOVERY

Conceptual plans for Willow Bend are in process and the Loveland Open Lands Division will work with other city departments and Larimer County during the design and development review process to obtain necessary approvals and permits for construction. Design is planned to begin in early 2018, with construction expected to begin in late 2018.

OUTDOOR ADVENTURE AREA AT WILLOW BEND

VISION SCOPE

The Outdoor Adventure and Challenge Area at Willow Bend will consist of adventure pods where children can safely and actively explore, discover, imagine, learn about the forest and see the world through the eyes of other animals. As an added element to The Grove outdoor learning area of Willow Bend, the adventure pods are designed to stimulate learning about aspects of animal behavior, encouraging children to run, peek, explore, and get in, on, and around everything the play pods afford. Logs, boulders and stepping stones will encourage imaginative play and help develop gross motor skills, balance, and coordination. Challenge elements can be used for individual play or teamwork exercises. The location is separated from the parking lot and access roads, which will allow children to wander freely, while parents relax.

The adventure challenge area is located at Willow Bend Natural Area, adjacent to the Boys & Girls Club and New Vision School, which will be connected with sidewalks and crusher-fine trails. Willow Bend is safely accessible from adjacent neighborhoods via sidewalks and crosswalks (with the exception of the 1st Street sidewalk proposed to be built on the north side of Willow Bend as part of this application, which will provide additional convenient access). The adventure challenge area will be

located approximately 400 feet south of the Willow Bend parking area and will be accessible for pedestrians, bicycles and strollers via a crusher-fine multi-purpose trail. Kids and families will be able to safely walk, run and bike to this area.

CURRENT CONDITIONS

This area currently consists of a canopy of large stands of poplar, elm and cottonwood trees in the area of former farmstead structures. Existing conditions are weedy and barren ground in need of restoration and enhancement for public use.

BARRIERS + SOLUTIONS

The adventure challenge area will provide a place where children can experience unstructured creative outdoor play in a safe environment that is convenient and accessible. Parents can feel at ease letting children explore the natural elements and wander throughout the play and challenge areas in a controlled natural setting. This area will be a stepping-stone to other areas of Willow Bend, providing a place where parents and children can become comfortable exploring the natural world before venturing to less developed wild areas. The adventure challenge area will be activated with learning and teambuilding exercises through Boys & Girls Club leaders and Loveland Open Lands programming for families and children, to build confidence and leadership skills in an outdoor setting.

This property allows direct access by bicycle for many youth and families on the east side of Loveland. As the City of Loveland continues to develop its recreational trail system, more and more kids will have easy and safe access to the site. The project site is adjacent to the Loveland Boys & Girls Club and a local charter school and is also in very close proximity to other Thompson School District schools and nearby large residential areas.

NEXT STEPS FOR IMPLEMENTATION + DISCOVERY

Plans for the adventure challenge area are currently in the conceptual stage. Full design, engineering and permitting will take place concurrently with the city's development of Willow Bend Natural Area for public access. Design and construction are anticipated to take place in 2018.

BIKE FLOW TRAILS AT WILLOW BEND

VISION SCOPE

The Bike Flow Trails at Willow Bend will consist of two new flow-type natural-surface trails to accommodate all skill levels and ages of bicycle riders. The International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) describes flow-type trails as follows: "Flow Trails take mountain bikers on a terrain-induced roller coaster experience, with little pedaling and braking necessary." Flow trails are designed to be usable by all skill levels, allowing users to choose their own speed and level of aggression to develop an individualized rhythm, or "flow," with the trail and terrain.

Flow trails are not only great fun for the user, but also a great learning tool to develop much-needed bike handling skills such as cornering, braking and weight-shifts. These skills are necessary whether riding natural-surface trails for recreation or paved surfaces for commuting to school/work. Standard features include rolling terrain, in-sloped turns, turns of varying radii, jumps of various sizes and sometimes features made of rock or wood. Features are built allowing beginner users to easily roll over primary features or bypass those that are more difficult. Alternate lines allow access to more difficult features as users' skill sets increase.

This project will construct two new trails on a sloped portion of Willow Bend Natural Area currently used for alfalfa farming and proposed to be converted

to trails and native short-grass prairie. One flow trail will be rated as beginner/intermediate and be approximately 0.9 miles in total length. The second trail will be rated as intermediate/advanced and be approximately 1.2 miles in total length. Primary trail sections will be built to accommodate the easier ability rating, with additional optional lines throughout the trail length providing features tailored to the more difficult ability rating. This allows users to ride the easier primary trail first and see the more difficult features before making the choice to ride them. It also allows for more creativity and individualized rhythm, choosing to ride some features and bypassing others.

Added features to be built could include:

- Ramped rocks/boulders/dirt 12" to 36" high
- Drops 4" to 24" high, rock and/or ladder bridge types
- Balance features from 24" to 6" wide, elevated from 4" to 24" high
- In-sloped and bermed turns of varying radii
- Dirt rollers from 8" to 24"

These trails will connect with a perimeter trail system, allowing directional access with an easy return route to the top of the trail system and connection to other adjacent trails.

CURRENT CONDITIONS

Currently a sloped portion of Willow Bend used for alfalfa farming.

BARRIERS + SOLUTIONS

The northern Colorado Front Range region has many existing trail opportunities. However, the opportunities for learning and developing skill sets important for an enjoyable mountain biking experience are extremely limited, especially for our region's youth. This region has multiple options for very easy beginner trails and for more difficult advanced-level trails. For those beginner-level users looking to expand their experience and ability, it is currently an often frustrating and painful process.

Moving from flat smooth trails to steep rocky trails without having an opportunity to develop the necessary skills and confidence is a significant barrier to participation and enjoyment. OMBC will lead skills clinics and group rides at the site for Boys & Girls Club members and other local youth and families, offering instruction in proper bike handling skills and techniques and emphasizing appropriate trail etiquette. OMBC will also offer pathways opportunities by hosting interns to assist with design, construction and programming. Another barrier to participation for area youth and families is the current need to drive a vehicle to existing trail systems.

NEXT STEPS FOR IMPLEMENTATION + DISCOVERY

Initial concept design is already complete. Work with project contractors can begin as early as December 2017 to begin the actual design process, develop exact trail specifications and skills feature placement. Construction would begin in April 2018 with full completion by August 2018, depending on contractor availability.

BIKE SKILLS FEATURES AT WILLOW BEND + ALONG EAST BIG THOMPSON RIVER TRAIL

VISION SCOPE

Bike Skills Features at Willow Bend and along the East Big Thompson River Trail will consist of the construction of multiple bike-optimized obstacles alongside wider crushed-gravel recreational trails (separate PLACES components) to provide opportunities for riders to develop and hone their riding skills. Obstacles will be made of varying size and texture to mimic many of the obstacles found in nearby natural-surface trail systems. Obstacles can include cobbles, boulders, narrow spaces, log roll-overs, ledges/drops, steps and elevated balance features. Features will be designed and incorporated alongside the adjacent trail to provide a safe and playful option for all users.

Bike skills features are a great learning tool to develop much-needed bike handling skills such as cornering, braking and weight-shifts. These skills are necessary whether riding natural-surface trails for recreation or paved surfaces for commuting to school/work. Features are built allowing beginner users to easily roll over primary features or bypass those that are more difficult.

This property allows direct access by bicycle for many youth and families on the east side of Loveland. As the City of Loveland continues to develop its recreational trail system, more and more kids will have easy and safe access to the site. The project site is adjacent to the Loveland Boys & Girls Club and a local charter school. It is also in very close proximity to other Thompson School District schools and nearby large residential areas.

Features to be built include:

- Uneven/rough tread made from cobbles and stones
- Rock and/or log roll-overs 4" to 12" high
- Ramped rocks/boulders 12" to 30" high
- Drops 4" to 24" high, rock and/or ladder bridge types
- Balance features from 24" to 6" wide, elevated from 4" to 24" high

CURRENT CONDITIONS

The bike skills features proposed will be located adjacent to planned bicycle and pedestrian trails throughout Willow Bend and along the E. Big Thompson River Trail. Current conditions consist primarily of restored grass meadow habitat adjacent to existing two-track roads in many places. The bike skills features use minimal space and resources and will not disturb sensitive areas.

BARRIERS + SOLUTIONS

The northern Colorado Front Range region has many existing trail opportunities. However, the opportunities for learning and developing skill sets important for an enjoyable mountain biking experience are extremely limited, especially for our region's youth. Our region has multiple options for very easy beginner trails and for more difficult advanced-level trails. For those beginner-level users looking to expand their experience and ability, it is currently an often frustrating and painful process. Moving from flat smooth trails to steep rocky trails without having an opportunity to develop the necessary skills and confidence is a significant barrier to participation and enjoyment.

OMBC will lead skills clinics and group rides at the site for Boys & Girls Club members and other local youth and families, providing instruction in proper bike handling skills and techniques and emphasizing appropriate trail etiquette. OMBC will also offer opportunities for pathways by hosting interns to assist with design, construction, and programming. Another barrier to participation for area youth and families is the current need to drive a vehicle to existing trail systems.

NEXT STEPS FOR IMPLEMENTATION + DISCOVERY

Initial concept design is already complete. Work with project contractors can begin as early as December 2017 to begin the actual design process, develop exact trail specifications and skills feature placement. Construction would begin in April 2018 with full completion by August 2018, depending on contractor availability.



Big Thompson River at Willow Bend

CURRENT CONDITIONS | WINONA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



WINONA SCHOOL IMPROVEMENTS

VISION SCOPE

Improvements at Winona Elementary School will greatly enhance the outdoor spaces for kids, teachers, families, and neighbors. All proposed improvements draw from interviews with educators, students, and staff at Winona, who desired innovative ways to tie nature into their curriculum, enhance the school property, and improve existing outdoor conditions.

At the core of schoolyard improvements is sustainable stormwater management projects that will transform the minimalistic and uninviting landscape into a vibrant environmental education opportunity that tells the story of our Big Thompson watershed, and the importance of clean, attractive waterways and safe, affordable water supplies. Pea gravel “voids” will become living laboratories of rain gardens and bioswales that capture and filter stormwater runoff from the building and impervious surfaces. These laboratories will not only soften and beautify the landscape, but also provide pleasant outdoor learning spaces with shade, cooler temperatures, improved air quality, and habitats for wildlife--allowing children to touch and see “real nature” in a way that brings educational lessons alive.

Integrated within the largest living laboratory will be an outdoor classroom with a shelter to provide a shaded, comfortable seating area for learning and gathering. The structure will include a 20’ x 20’ metal-roofed covered shelter, boulders for informal seating, and 3 durable commercial-quality picnic tables. Crusher-fine trails will be incorporated into the overall landscape to provide an opportunity for kids to explore and connect to various elements throughout the property. The 6’ wide natural-surface eco-trail will consist of an 800’ loop path around existing fields and connecting to the existing playground and planned perennial commons area. Soft-surface

trails through the perennial commons will provide access to the garden’s trees and shrubs as well as paths for nature exploration through native pollinator planting areas.

Borrowing from the school’s historic ties to the local pioneer and educator, Winona Washburn Taylor, the schoolyard will also include a Perennial Commons garden area. This garden will be open to the public and contain native plants that thrive with less resources and attention than a traditional community garden. The Perennial Commons will include familiar fruit trees (such as apple, plum, and cherry), berry bushes (including native species), and native flowers and herbs to support pollinator species. Winona teachers and staff wish to create an outdoor learning garden as well as a community gathering space where neighbors can meet and work together. This space will be accessible to members of the school community and neighborhood with watering supported by the school district. Planting projects by the school community will get the fruit trees and berry bushes started, with pollinator species planted in supporting spaces. High Plains Environmental Center and Loveland Youth Gardeners will provide expertise in appropriate plantings for this project. Paths consisting of log steppers will provide a fun and active way to access the perennial commons areas, and will offer opportunities for creative play and large motor skills development.

New playground surfacing will be incorporated as well, and involve the removal and replacement of deteriorating wood chips on the 6,600 ft² playground with new engineered wood fiber surfacing to improve safety at the play area. Concrete ramps will provide accessibility for all ages and abilities. New educational pavement markings will improve opportunities to incorporate outdoor learning into curriculum for a variety of subjects, including geography, science, math, social studies, and physical education.

GREEN UP WINONA ELEMENTARY!



CURRENT CONDITIONS

Current conditions include a combination of irrigated turf and non-irrigated weed infested fields, barren pea gravel landscaping, inefficient stormwater management systems, and unmanageable playground surfacing.

BARRIERS + SOLUTIONS

Existing conditions at Winona Elementary are not conducive to outdoor learning, play and access to nature. Teachers, students, and parents discussed these barriers at the Winona improvement meeting and stated their preference for on-campus improvements that could facilitate a greater connection with nature. These proposed improvements will provide safe, convenient access to natural elements, create comfortable and inspiring learning stations, and facilitate green stormwater management practices. The bioswales and rain gardens will make smart use of existing stormwater runoff, create wildlife habitat, improve the playground aesthetic, and allow educators to teach through real-world learning on native-plant landscapes, protecting drinking water sources, providing green space, restoring waterways, and improving water quality.

The Perennial Commons area will provide a learning landscape for lessons and programming on nature, science, math, art and social studies. Cherry trees will be incorporated into a history lesson on Loveland's early agricultural industry as the largest cherry producer west of the Mississippi River, with 10,000 acres of cherry orchards in the 1920s. Lessons will also focus on the range of water needs by the different plants. While the trees will require irrigation, berry bushes will tolerate little to no care, and the native flowers/herbs will demonstrate the benefits of low-water gardens. At the end of the season, lessons can focus on harvesting and preserving for winter use. Freezing and canning skills would help families save on food expenses, build self-sufficiency, and provide an ongoing reward for the effort in caring for the

commons. Knowledge gained of native plants, natural systems, and of where food comes from will carry through the classroom and through students' lives.

Programming will be provided by Loveland Open Lands, High Plains Environmental Center, and Loveland Youth Gardeners, on native plants, gardening, history, and life skills. Living laboratories, the outdoor classroom, trails, and playground improvements will be activated by the school community for outdoor lessons, lunches, gathering spaces, exercise clubs, and social, emotional and physical development in a safe, convenient, enjoyable setting.

Improvements at Winona Elementary will be on school property and incorporated into the campus according to school district policy. Access will be connected to other areas of the school grounds and the site is accessible to pedestrians, bicycles, and strollers via existing sidewalks, within walking and biking distance of the Winona community. Winona is also conveniently located adjacent to the City's Osborn Park and Winona Outdoor Swimming Pool, providing a complex of community spaces for a variety of outdoor recreation uses.

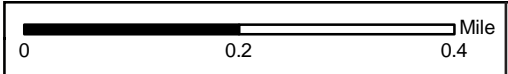
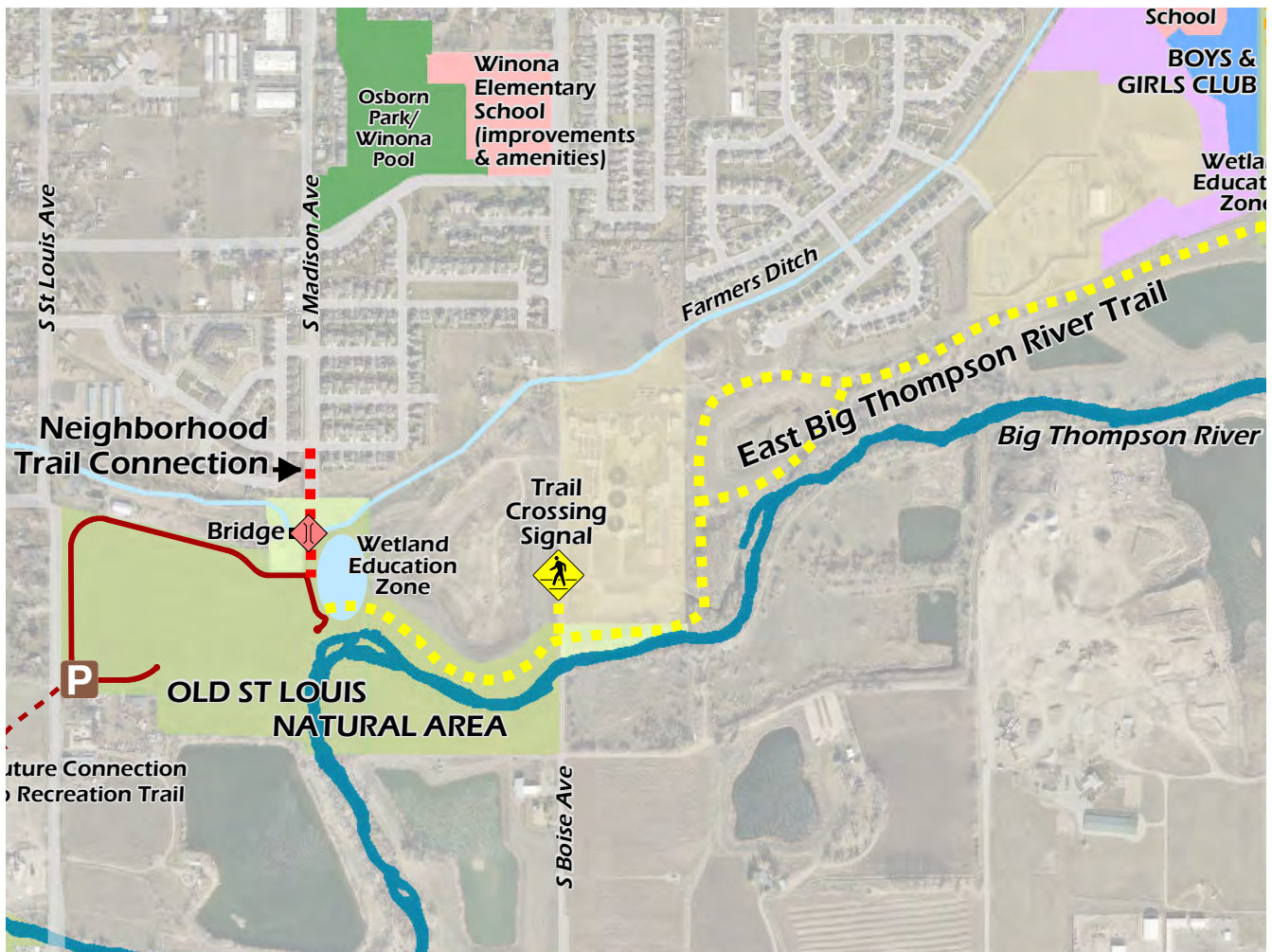
NEXT STEPS FOR IMPLEMENTATION + DISCOVERY

Plans for the Winona School improvements are currently in the conceptual stage. Full design, engineering and permitting will take place in 2018 in cooperation with the Thompson R2-J School District. Construction is anticipated to take place in 2018-2019.

CURRENT CONDITIONS | NEIGHBORHOOD TRAIL CONNECTION



CONCEPT MAP | OLD ST. LOUIS NATURAL AREA ACCESS TRAIL



OLD ST. LOUIS NATURAL AREA ACCESS TRAIL

VISION SCOPE

The Old St. Louis Natural Area Access Trail will provide a new off-street trail connection from southeast Loveland neighborhoods to the Big Thompson River corridor. The trail will extend from existing ROW and sidewalks on Madison Ave. to existing trails at Old St. Louis Natural Area, a 40-acre complex of wetland and riparian habitat. Old St. Louis is currently only accessible by car. The new trail connection will consist of a 130' section of concrete sidewalk extending south from Madison Ave., a 10' wide x 40' long bridge over the Farmers Ditch, and a 400' section of crusher-fine multi-purpose trail connecting to existing accessible trails at Old St. Louis. Due to sloping terrain below the ditch, grading and retaining walls will be needed to provide an accessible trail connection. At the Madison Ave. outfall to the Big Thompson River, the City's Stormwater Division is planning a wetland restoration project to replace the failing outfall structure. The Open Lands and Stormwater Divisions will cooperate on enhancements at the restoration site for public access and education, including a wetland education boardwalk and bilingual interpretive signage.

The proposed trail connection will be accessible from existing Madison Ave. ROW and neighborhood sidewalks as well as nearby parks, other city facilities and Winona Elementary School via sidewalks and crosswalks. This trail connection will open new access to the river corridor for much of the southeast Loveland community. Old St. Louis Natural Area does not currently have safe pedestrian or bicycle access due to narrow shoulders on county roads. The Farmers Ditch is also a barrier to access from nearby neighborhoods and a safe bridge crossing and off-street trail connection are needed to provide youth, families, neighbors and school groups access to the natural area.

CURRENT CONDITIONS

No safe Big Thompson River corridor access currently exists from southeast Loveland neighborhoods. The Old St. Louis Natural Area is currently only accessible by car due to narrow shoulders on county roads that are unsafe for pedestrians and bicycles.

BARRIERS + SOLUTIONS

Construction of this trail connection is a high priority in order to provide public access to the river corridor. Old St. Louis is currently the only natural area along the east Big Thompson River that is open to the public, and residents must drive to visit the site because of the lack of safe pedestrian/bicycle connections. With the recent addition of 15 acres and 1/4 mile of river frontage to the property, this trail connection will address the barrier of close, safe, convenient access to natural areas. Community members indicated that trail exercise was the biggest motivator to get outside, so this trail will encourage greater outdoor participation. It also helps address the barriers teachers identified, including lack of access to natural areas within close proximity to schools.

School groups from nearby Winona Elementary will also be able to walk to the river corridor for field trips and programs at Old St. Louis. The site will be activated with programming about wetland and river habitats with hands-on educational activities at the wetland boardwalk. Programs will also integrate Loveland history and highlight the location of Old St. Louis as the original town site. These lessons can then be tied in to the new Winona perennial commons, where cherry trees will be planted to carry on Loveland's heritage as a major cherry producer. Guided nature and history walks will also be offered to the public by the City's Open Lands Division, and the trail connection will provide a means for residents to safely walk or bike to the site to attend these programs.

NEXT STEPS FOR IMPLEMENTATION + DISCOVERY

The City of Loveland currently owns the Madison Ave. ROW and Old St. Louis Natural Area. Larimer County will deed a 2.74-ac inholding needed for the bridge and trail connection to the city by year-end 2017. Permission to bridge the Farmers Ditch is also expected to be granted by year-end 2017. Design is planned to begin in early 2018, with construction anticipated to be completed in late 2018.

CURRENT CONDITIONS | EAST BIG THOMPSON RIVER TRAIL



CONCEPT MAP | EAST BIG THOMPSON RIVER TRAIL



EAST BIG THOMPSON RIVER TRAIL

VISION SCOPE

The 1.5-mile East Big Thompson River Trail will connect Old St. Louis Natural Area to Willow Bend Natural Area on city properties and easements, providing a new 2-mile long contiguous trail from St. Louis Ave. to County Road 9.

In the past year, Loveland Open Lands has negotiated and acquired several key parcels and complex trail easements to make this trail connection possible, including the purchase of Willow Bend and an Old St. Louis addition, and easements from private landowners and the city's Water Department.

The project will consist of a 6' W x 7,800 LF multi-purpose crusher fine trail, a pedestrian-activated signal and crosswalk at Boise Ave., a bridge crossing at the Water Treatment Plant outfall, and a wetland boardwalk crossing at the Denver Ave. stormwater outfall at Willow Bend. The boardwalk will incorporate an educational component with provide interpretive signage and hands-on wetland education opportunities for school groups and the public.

The proposed river trail will tie in to existing and planned trails at Old St. Louis and Willow Bend, and kids will be able to access the trail from the east and west via safe, off-street connections proposed as part of this Inspire application. Pedestrian and bike access will also be convenient for Winona and New Vision School students and Boys & Girls Club members. Other nearby amenities include Osborn Park and Winona Outdoor Swimming Pool, so the trail will add a new outdoor recreation component to the southeast Loveland community.

CURRENT CONDITIONS

Current conditions along the E. Big Thompson River Trail consist primarily of open lands in the river corridor. The trail will take advantage of existing two-track farm roads where possible, meandering through cottonwood groves and past gravel-mined

ponds. The majority of the trail will be built within a defined 50-foot wide trail easement through private property, providing new public access to this section of the river. The trail corridor also borders a wastewater treatment plant and an electrical substation.

BARRIERS + SOLUTIONS

Access to open lands and additional trails were two of the highest priorities identified by Loveland citizens in the city's 2014 Parks & Recreation Master Plan. The feedback from public meetings confirmed this desire within the southeast Loveland community, as well as indicated trail exercise was the biggest inspiration to getting outside.

The East Big Thompson River Trail will provide much-needed public access from the southeast Loveland area to the Big Thompson River ecosystem, a connection which currently does not exist. The improvement will also open a new 2-mile contiguous pedestrian and bicycle trail corridor from Old St. Louis Natural Area to Simpson Ponds State Wildlife Area, offering families, youth, and educators in the community opportunities to engage in nature without requiring a vehicle.

This addresses the barriers of connectivity and transportation costs by providing a safe, proximate, and beautiful setting to connect multiple natural areas without the need for vehicular transport. Programming planned for this trail includes wetland education field trips, group bike rides, and a variety of guided walks and other programs for youth and families.

NEXT STEPS FOR IMPLEMENTATION + DISCOVERY

The City of Loveland holds all easements and owns all but one property (River Parcel) needed to build the East Big Thompson River Trail. The city plans to close on the River Parcel by September 2017. Open Lands will work with other city departments and Larimer County during the design and development review process to obtain necessary approvals and permits for construction of the trail. Design is planned to begin in 2018, with construction anticipated for 2019.



Programs: Preschool Plant Walk

PROGRAMS + PATHWAYS

Programs such as outdoor education and organized recreation experiences should help make places close to home come alive as well as provide opportunities for kids to play in and experience nature at more distant locations over time.

Pathways provide youth with opportunities to participate in outdoor service learning and stewardship projects as pathways to leadership and career opportunities.

The Project Outdoor Loveland collection of programs and pathways opportunities is designed to provide scope and sequence to outdoor nature learning and experiences. The collection is intended to provide experiences that both build upon each other and stand alone. It is possible for a student or family to attend one program and feel that they have had a full experience; everything they participated in or learned has a beginning, a middle, and an end. No one will be at a disadvantage or uncomfortable if they were unable to attend more than that one program. If a student or family has the chance to attend several programs they will find that they build on each other, parts will come together to form a larger body of knowledge and a big picture view of nature, natural systems, and how our actions and presence in nature are part of the system.

If a person, and this is especially true for young people, is able to attend several

programs, take advantage of several opportunities, participate in several events, they will be able to build skills and knowledge and to practice and to gain mastery of both.

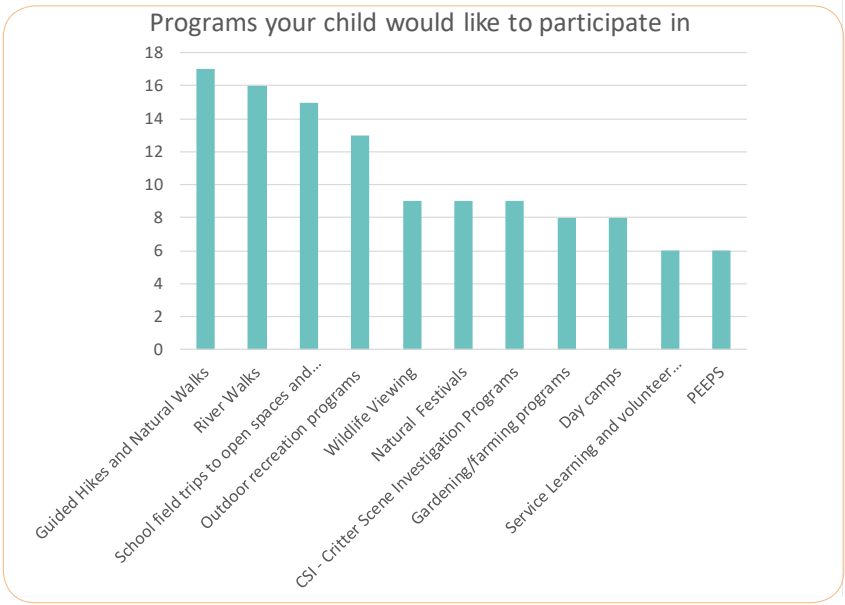
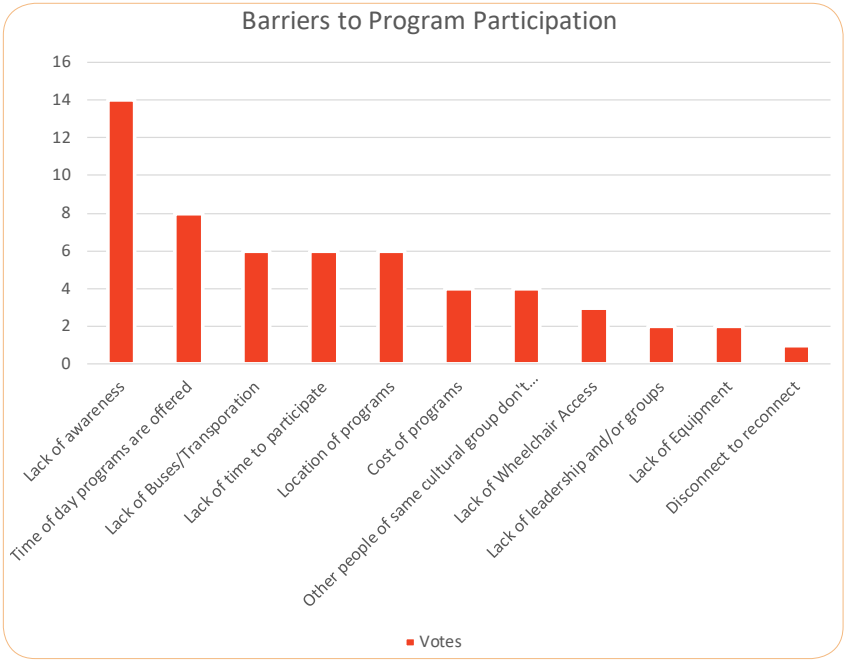
We feel strongly that if a student is exposed to knowledge leading to understanding in educational programs; if a student becomes comfortable engaging in outdoor activities and gains recreational skills in the activities offered; if they are able to take advantage of opportunities provided by these partners, we will have done all we can to counteract all those things that have pulled children and adults away from their connection with the natural world.

Bringing back or providing new connections to nature back; improving health and well-being; establishing a lasting value for our open lands and community members; that is our purpose.



Pathways: Trailbuilding Service Learning

JANUARY 24, 2017 PROGRAMS PUBLIC MEETING FEEDBACK



PROGRAMS

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROGRAMMING FOR K-12 YOUTH

The City of Loveland Open Lands Division values the idea that our future stewards of open lands can be found and fostered today. The Division does this by offering children and adults opportunities for activity oriented educational programs. At the heart of our current offerings in public education and outreach are our field trip programs for school age children. We currently offer three programs that serve primarily 3rd - 5th grades. Currently, 2nd and 3rd graders attend our Plants and Places program, which includes lessons on unique and hazardous plants of Loveland, seed dispersal, cottonwood corridors, and wetlands plants with a cattails dissection lab. Fourth and 5th grade classes attend our Urban Wilderness program, which includes such topics as living with wildlife, wildlife adaptations, and includes our river lab where students collect and identify macroinvertebrates to assess the river's health as it passes through town. Our third program, Wildlife Around Us, is more advanced and includes animal classification, wildlife management, and changing climate as it pertains to changes in wildlife found around us.

We have found that we have increased participation when the program site is close to the student's home neighborhood and when teachers are able to walk students to the program avoiding the cost of buses for transportation. Inspire support is being sought to bring these programs to additional audiences; specifically for development of learning stations, signage, volunteer instructor materials and student activity equipment as part of the development of Willow Bend Natural Area. The current programs can be adapted to the new location and then be available to audiences that currently cannot reach them. Additional support is being requested to provide transportation funding for schools too distant for students to walk to natural areas where programs are offered.

A preschool environmental education program is offered to the public once a month, in two sessions, at a site that changes location each quarter. Currently limited to 20-25 children per class, these sessions are very popular and we have had to turn away families due to capacity issues. Inspire support will allow us to replicate these programs at pre-schools in the project area, reaching another audience of children who may not attend due to working parent or transportation barriers.

Another program that will be replicated with Inspire support is the after-school pilot for the 2017-18 school year at Bill Reed Middle School. Bill Reed is within walking distance of the City's River Edge area and 3 mini-courses have been designed and initially funded by a Colorado Health Foundation grant. While currently in final curriculum design stages, with GOCO support for activity materials, these mini-courses in orienteering, art in nature, and GIS aided research will be adapted for Willow Bend Natural Area, engaging Boys & Girls Club participants and New Vision middle school students, and at other middle schools, to reach all students that feed into Mountain View High School.

Our goal is to facilitate the teaching of Colorado State standards while bringing the students in contact with nature and natural systems. We strive to make it easier for teachers to incorporate outdoor experiences so that more of these experiences happen. We want students to become comfortable in the outdoors, to become life-long observers and students of nature, and to be able to share their knowledge with others.

Just as school classes take a break for the summer, many Open Lands educational programs are not held in the summer. During this time when the Loveland Open Lands Division shifts to more public and family offerings, the Loveland Parks and Recreation Department has several summer camps that train students in various outdoor and



leadership skills. The following camps all fill a need as they serve grades 6-12 and all have an outdoor focus: Youth of Loveland Outdoors (YOLO), Junior Counselor Camp, WILD Wilderness Camp, ABLE to Sail Camp and VAN-GO! Art Camp. With GOCO support, two students from the Boys & Girls Club will receive scholarships to each of the camps offered. The Parks and Recreation Foundation will cover half of the campership fee and we have requested the other half of the cost be covered by GOCO. In this way, we will be able to provide additional opportunities for youth to get outdoors and build skills throughout the summer.

YOUTHS TO SERVE

K-12.

BARRIERS + SOLUTIONS

Within the project area communities, the barriers include lack of or expensive bus transportation and the physical distances to program areas. Economic and cultural barriers also exist; many families have working parents and some speak English as a second language. Families in the project area also spend substantially less money on education than the city average. These elements make it harder for students to attend programs that require transportation or additional adult supervision.

GOCO funds will be used for supplies, equipment and transportation. GOCO funding will allow programs to be held at schools within the project area and within walking distance of Winona, New Vison, and the Boys & Girls Club. Even students at Mountain View High School can bike to the Boys & Girls Club and Willow Bend Natural Area. By utilizing the schools, the Club, and Willow Bend Natural Area, children will have teachers, club staff and program providers located within reach of their homes and neighborhoods. With GOCO support, those families that have not been able to financially support sending a child to one of the Parks and Recreation summer camp offerings will

have an opportunity to apply for a camp scholarship. A small but significant barrier, the lack of awareness of opportunities will be addressed by the new outdoor program coordinator being able to expand communication with schools and the Boys & Girls Club, both of which also have some bilingual staff available. As students and parents attend these programs in areas that are part of their community, they will be comfortable and able to return to these same places on their own and share with family and friends their learning and experiences.

PEOPLE ENGAGED IN THE OUTDOORS - A PUBLIC + FAMILY FOCUS

The City of Loveland Open Lands Division has had a period of rapid growth in the last 2 years. We have opened new sites, offered new activities, and developed new events designed to encourage responsible and engaged use of open lands and natural areas. Loveland Open Lands knows that area residents value their natural areas and trails; by their support, their use, and their participation in the activities offered to date. Even so, the majority of people attending a program or activity are coming to the natural area site for the first time.

Some of the activities that have been offered in the last two years include:

- River Ecology for Anglers – offered in spring, one class for adults, one for families with younger children
- Guided Bird Walks and Nature Hikes – held once per month, all ages welcome
- CSI: Critter Scene Investigations – held twice per year, early summer and fall. Participants travel along a trail with a book of clues, stopping at stations staffed by volunteers who assist in the solving of a mystery involving a local wild animal.
- Dog Day of Summer – Held once per year in the spring, this annual event provides opportunities for the



public to engage with local goods and services providers focusing on our canine friends. Public education of behaviors desired in natural areas is a focus. The event includes trainers and areas to try agility and other activities.

- Evening Hikes & Activities - a moonrise history hike of the original town site at Old St. Louis Natural Area.
- Numerous volunteer stewardship projects - Held throughout the year, these community events offer hands-on ways for the public to help with restoration, planting, cleanup and weed removal projects.

With the development of Willow Bend Natural Area and additions at Old St. Louis, these programs will be delivered to a new area and new audience. For example, Pond Ecology and guided walks are adaptable (and can include CPW adjacent acreage), and Critter Scene Investigations can take place at natural areas throughout the city. With implementation of our GOCO supported plan, family stewardship projects will be promoted within the area that will allow families and other residents to model care for open lands and natural areas. Family stewardship of restoration areas could foster a connection and a responsibility for that space. A family, as citizen scientists responsible for monitoring bird boxes, becomes a caretaker on a small scale observing the lives of birds and the natural systems that affect them. By offering scope and sequence beginning with introductory programming and leading to on-going stewardship responsibilities, families will have the opportunity to create a lasting relationship with the natural areas of their local community.

YOUTHS TO SERVE

All ages and families.

BARRIERS + SOLUTIONS

Lack of awareness is a significant barrier to program participation, evidenced by the number of first time visitors to each site during programs and demonstrated

in the feedback from public meetings. As a small staff, the Open Lands Division utilizes the advertising tools at hand; our division website, social media, newspaper and electronic posting boards in other public parts of the city. It often is the person who is able to contact club or school staff, who has time to use the club and school social media sites, post on other providers calendars, post in additional publications, etc. that can really get the word out. GOCO support of a Public Outreach and Outdoor Programs Coordinator would make this possible. Other barriers to attendance include proximity, transportation, or activities and programs being offered in one region of the city or during school or business hours. As mentioned before, development of an eastern natural area such as Willow Bend will bring the location to the community. By utilizing a site next door to the Boys & Girls Club (Willow Bend) or a room within the Boys & Girls Club the door is opened to offer programs after school, on weekends, or in the evening.

GOCO funds will be used for materials and supplies to support these public programs.

COORDINATOR POSITION

Offering programming outside of school hours translates to an increased need for trained volunteers and staff to organize and present these programs. Because the Open Lands staff is small we are requesting, in addition to the coordinator, funds to send staff volunteers to National Association of Interpretation trainings to become Certified Interpretive Guides and then to become Certified Interpretive Trainers – a Train the Trainer course. This will give current Open Lands staff more depth and ability to have another person assist with training volunteers, even certifying them as CIGs thereby increasing the number of volunteers qualified to provide programs and quality outdoor experiences.

OUTDOOR CLUB

Boys & Girls Club youth will have the opportunity to connect with the outdoors through numerous programs and activities. Outdoor programming will be provided daily throughout the entire year, and will be divided based on ages and abilities. This will be a progressive program where youth will build upon their knowledge through three different stages.

Stage 1 (6-9 years old): Youth will have the opportunity for local outdoor engagement. They will have opportunities to visit local parks and open spaces, go on easy guided hikes, learn basic principles about the outdoors and information about their local community. The goal of this stage is for our youth to build a foundation of knowledge about the outdoors.

Stage 2 (10-12 years old): Youth will go outside the walls of their local community and will have the opportunity to visit state parks and regional open spaces, learn about the concepts of nature preservation and the importance of our ecosystems. The goal of this stage is for our youth to develop an appreciation of the outdoors.

Stage 3 (13-15 years old): Youth will have the opportunity to put their knowledge to use and participate in larger scale excursions including: backpacking, camping, community service, and learning survival skills. Sites could include national parks, other federal lands, and Heart J Center for Experiential Learning at Sylvan Dale Ranch. The goal of this stage is to have our youth transform their knowledge into active engagement by utilizing the skills they have been learning throughout the program.

YOUTHS TO SERVE

Youths between the ages of six and fifteen years old.

BARRIERS + SOLUTIONS

Through this program, youth will have the opportunity to progressively develop

outdoor skills, addressing the barrier of a lack of outdoor skills and knowledge. The barrier of the cost of transportation and gear will be addressed through the use of GOCO funds to travel to locations. The proximate location of the club in regards to the project area, and the fact that it is offered to youth who would already be at the club, addresses the barrier of connectivity and a lack of awareness of programs. GOCO funds will be used for club vehicle maintenance and fuel.

COORDINATOR POSITION

As a separate Capacity component, GOCO funds are being requested to hire a dedicated staff member who specifically works on the Outdoor Club Program. That staff member will establish partnerships with outdoor focused organizations, setting up field trips and developing the curriculum for the program. The funds requested through this Program will be used to pay for program supplies, field trip costs, program promotion materials, and other necessary expenses for Outdoor Club members to attend and participate in these programs.

TRADITIONAL OUTDOOR RECREATION: TRAIN THE LEADERS + PARENTS

Colorado Youth Outdoors (CYO) provides a variety of programming to help youth and families learn traditional outdoor recreation skills while also developing intentional relationship-building skills. For Inspire, CYO will provide several options for youth and their families to participate at both the Loveland Boys & Girls Club and at Swift Ponds, CYO's Outdoor Recreation and Education facility in Windsor.

CYO's Core Programming will be offered to families with middle and high school students to build and strengthen their relationships while learning lifelong recreation skills. Core programming is structured in 12 to 15-week sessions



in three-week Ventures. Each Venture focuses on one traditional outdoor recreation activity including fly fishing, spin fishing, fly tying, archery, shooting sports, camping and survival, and orienteering. Programs are run in the evening, and require that a parent or significant adult participate with each youth attending. CYO also provides trained mentors to work with a parent who has multiple students attending or when a parent is unable to attend regularly.

CYO will also provide parent/youth programming for the Coalition at the Loveland Boys & Girls Club for younger youth and their families. These programs could run in a one-day weekend format or in three-week Ventures in evening sessions. Each Venture focuses on the outdoor recreation activities outlined above for older youth and is a minimum of six hours in length. In addition, CYO will provide Venture programming in a two-hour format on designated days for youth and families at the Boys & Girls Club to support parents as they seek to take their families into the great outdoors.

To provide continued sustainability to the Coalition, CYO will provide training through their Train the Leaders course, which will train leaders from the schools, city, recreation programs, Boys & Girls Club, and other direct service providers to work with youth and families in the outdoors. This 15-hour course is taught in either a three-day format or multiple evenings and a weekend. One graduate credit is available through Adams State University. This training is designed to introduce teachers, parents, recreation leaders and community leaders to the concepts of teaching sport and outdoor activities for 6 outdoor recreation curriculums and a variety of Nature Play activities, along with CYO's relationship curriculum. They will also learn about planning for an activity, program or season, how participants learn and methods for explaining, demonstrating and teaching skills. This training will allow existing agencies and programs to

continue to provide the programming and support for teaching outdoor recreation skills and activities to youth and families in the community.

YOUTHS TO SERVE

Core Programming: Middle and High School students and families

Additional Programming: Pre-Kindergarten through elementary age children and families

BARRIERS + SOLUTIONS

Colorado Youth Outdoors programming will address most of the barriers to participation that have been identified by the Loveland Inspire Coalition, including costs, location, and lack of skills and knowledge. The cost of transportation and gear is addressed by providing some programs at the Boys & Girls Club and providing the equipment and gear needed to learn outdoor skills, along with an equipment library for participants to check out gear once they have attended related programs. CYO programs directly address the barrier of parents and youth lacking outdoor skills and knowledge by providing training in a variety of traditional outdoor skills to increase participants' knowledge, comfort and familiarity with these activities. GOCO Funds will be used for instructor stipends, equipment, and train the teacher programs.

Funds will be used to pay for programming costs for instructors, equipment and materials for the identified programming. Funding will also help cover costs at Swift Ponds, CYO's Outdoor Recreation and Education Facility, for on-site programming. Funding is also being requested to fill the programming and equipment library trailers that CYO will be purchasing as In-Kind cash contribution to the grant.

5TH GRADE OUTDOOR EDUCATION

At Sylvan Dale Ranch in the foothills west of Loveland, Heart J Center for Experiential Learning will create outdoor education field trips for the approximately 350 5th graders from Winona, High Plains, New Vision Stansberry, Mary Blair and Monroe. HJC's 5th grade programs focus on ecological systems and include study of wildlife corridors, food chains and river ecology. Programs for 5th graders also include confidence building through connecting with horses, activities that combine nature and art, and challenge course activities that build communication skills, trust, and teamwork. The goals of Heart J Center's 5th grade programs are to strengthen practical knowledge of the natural sciences and to build self-confidence and communication skills to help 5th graders prepare for the transition to middle school. Heart J Center welcomes parents to participate in our outdoor education trips at no extra charge.

YOUTHS TO SERVE

5th graders

BARRIERS + SOLUTIONS

Cost is a critical barrier for many schools that wish to offer their students outdoor experiences with entry fees, cost of guides and/or instructors, and transportation. GOCO funds will be used for buses, instructor stipends, and in some cases for entry fees to Heart J Center events and facility rental from Sylvan Dale, though on a reduced cost/sliding scale basis. This funding therefore addresses the barriers of cost and transportation and makes this programming available to all students, regardless of economic status.

7TH GRADE OUTDOOR EDUCATION

Heart J Center's 7th grade programs at Sylvan Dale Ranch in the foothills west of Loveland emphasize earth sciences, with the opportunity to explore Sylvan Dale's unique and varied geologic features. HJC will work with the 7th grade teams at Conrad Ball Middle School, High Plains School, and New Vision Charter School to serve 250+ 7th graders with a one-day field trip that combines earth sciences, teambuilding and confidence activities, and outdoor skills. The goals for HJC 7th grade outdoor education programs are to encourage curiosity and passion for outdoor exploration, increase comfort levels with playing and learning outside, and to ignite an interest in hands-on study of earth sciences. Parents are welcome to attend the 7th grade field trips.

YOUTHS TO SERVE

7th graders

BARRIERS + SOLUTIONS

Cost was identified by nearly all stakeholders as a significant barrier to program participation, so GOCO funds will be used to address this barrier. Educators acknowledged the cost of entry fees, cost of guides and/or instructors, and transportation as primary reasons for not including outdoor programming in their curriculums and field trips. Additionally, parents at community meetings identified programming cost as a major barrier, and demographic data indicates families in the project area spend significantly less annually on educational purposes than the citywide average, which gave this program a high prioritization. GOCO funds will be used to eliminate the barriers of cost and transportation in order to improve youth participation. GOCO funds will be used for instructor stipends, busses, supplies, equipment, and facility rental.



FAMILY ADVENTURE NIGHT AT SYLVAN DALE RANCH

At Sylvan Dale Ranch in the foothills west of Loveland, Heart J Center will partner with City of Loveland to provide family adventure nights for southeast Loveland families. Offered in the spring and fall, these programs would include a natural resources program such as a wildlife corridor hike, learn-to-camp activities, or an astronomy presentation, each combined with a cookout. The primary goal of these programs is to help families become more comfortable in the outdoors by having a positive experience together. Additionally, children and their parents will have the chance to connect over shared discovery of astronomy, hiking, wildlife, camping or other new topics they might choose to explore further as a family.

YOUTHS TO SERVE

Youth of all ages and families.

BARRIERS + SOLUTIONS

To overcome the barrier of the cost of transportation, we would charter one or several school buses as a “Nature Bus” to transport families from southeast Loveland to Sylvan Dale. This will increase youth participation from the project area. GOCO funds will be used for instructor stipends, buses, supplies, equipment, and facility rental. In addition to paying for transportation, GOCO funds would be used for food for the cookouts and instructor stipends, which keeps the program affordable for all families and encourages greater participation.

NATIVE PLANT + RESTORATION PROGRAM

At Willow Bend Natural Area, staff members from High Plains Environmental Center (HPEC) will provide programming related to native plants, restoration, and pollinator gardening for youth and families. Much of the programming will be a learning experience related to these and other related subjects, such as guided plant walks, creating backyard pollinator habitat, and restoration with native plant species. Hands-on service-learning projects will be offered as well, including restoration and stewardship projects in upland, wetland and riparian areas at Willow Bend. Projects could include seeding native wetlands and shortgrass prairie, planting native wetland plugs and riparian shrubs and trees, harvesting and staking native willows, and collecting native seed for propagation. Creating and planting native plant habitat is a great lesson on the interconnectedness of plants and wildlife; one cannot survive and form a whole ecosystem without the others. The goal of this program is to connect youth and families with nature and to empower them to take responsibility for the future of our environment.

YOUTHS TO SERVE

Youth of all ages and families

BARRIERS + SOLUTIONS

In addition to addressing the barrier of transportation, this program addresses the barrier of a lack of outdoor skills or knowledge. Providing a spectrum of opportunities for a variety of interests and ages will increase participants’ skills and knowledge about native plants, restoration and pollinators, to support their awareness and comfort in the natural world.

HPEC programs will connect youth, families, and community members to the outdoors by providing a safe, convenient space to learn. The GOCO funds will cover staff time and materials. HPEC



is able to match staff time costs and material costs; HPEC can also provide the plants at a discounted rate from the our nursery.

GOCO funds will be used for supplies, including plants and tools necessary for programming, to create interactive learning experiences that are centrally located adjacent to the Boys & Girls Club, providing easy access for club members and their families as well as neighbors in the area.

YOUTH + FAMILY BIKING PROGRAMS

The goals of Overland Mountain Bike Club's Youth Program are to: encourage more kids to participate in the life sport of mountain biking; teach and encourage safe, responsible and effective riding practices; foster a sense of environmental sustainability and stewardship; bring awareness and appreciation of healthy living habits.

By offering multiple group ride and skills clinic opportunities, OMBC will provide on-site instruction in a dedicated, purpose-built learning environment to both youth and family participants. At least 10 OMBC volunteers will complete a Ride Leader Certification Course offered by IMBA (International Mountain Bicycling Association). This will increase OMBC's ability to provide high-quality instruction with a multitude of qualified individuals.

Skills clinics will provide opportunities for youth and families to actively participate in a hands-on learning environment. After an initial assessment of each rider in the group, the following basic bike handling skills will be practiced:

- Proper body and weight positioning
- Pedal position
- Balance
- Eye movement
- Braking, steering and speed control
- Gearing and pedal cadence

Proper trail etiquette and "Share the Trail" guidelines will be heavily emphasized throughout the programs. Opportunities for attendees to participate in volunteer trail maintenance days will be strongly encouraged, helping to pass on an appreciation for environmental stewardship. Students will be encouraged to practice healthy living habits, such as eating well-balanced meals, avoiding sugary drinks and junk foods, getting adequate sleep, exercising regularly and ensuring proper recovery after heavy exercise days.

Youth and family-oriented group rides will provide a fun, low-stress opportunity for attendees to participate in rides with others of similar ability. Some "helpful hints" may be provided during the ride, but direct instruction will be limited. Proper trail etiquette and "Share the Trail" guidelines will be heavily emphasized throughout all group rides. Attendees will also be encouraged to participate in volunteer trail maintenance days.



YOUTHS TO SERVE

Youth of all ages and families

BARRIERS + SOLUTIONS

GOCO funds will be used to cover the costs of the additional training and background checks of volunteers, event planning, volunteer coordination and management, and other direct event costs. By leveraging GOCO funds, OMBC can offer events at no cost to participants. This is a huge incentive to participation, especially to many of the area's low-income families. There are currently no similar programs available in the area, so this provides an opportunity for community members to develop new outdoor skills. The popularity of bicycling is widely known, as is its role in connecting kids to the outdoors. Proper instruction and guidance is key to developing a life-long appreciation of the sport, which is the primary goal of this program. The Boys & Girls Club maintains a small bike library, which could be utilized by club members to

participate OMBC-led programs. This gear library addresses the cost of gear for club members (which was identified as a significant barrier in community meetings), allowing substantially more youth to participate in this program regardless of economic barriers.

funding Branch Out will address the barriers of the timing of programs and the lack/cost of transportation, by bringing the programming to Winona during school hours and Willow Bend Natural Area during normal Boys & Girls Club hours.

BRANCH OUT: GARDEN PROGRAMMING FOR K-12 YOUTH

Loveland Youth Gardeners (LYG) will provide direct support to southeast Loveland, specifically to Boys & Girls Club members and Winona Elementary students, in the form of educational outreach. We will support the Boys & Girls Club with their garden, help improve existing conditions, and provide seasonal classes for their participants. Additionally, Loveland Youth Gardeners will provide at least two programs each year at Winona Elementary for their school and the Perennial Commons garden area proposed in Places. Furthermore, LYG will host interns, teach job skills, and provide real-work experience in business and agriculture to young people to support the pathways component of the program.



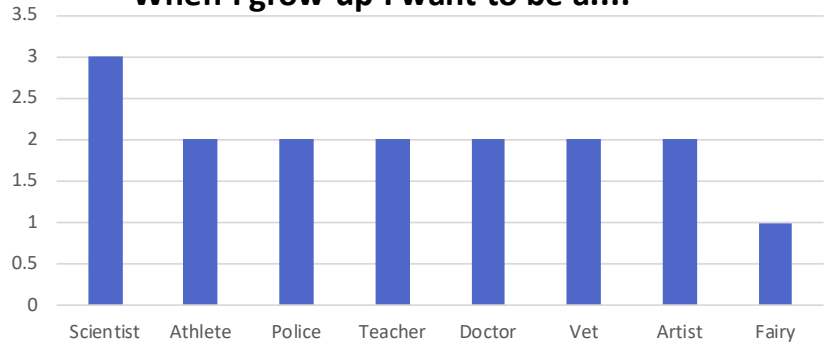
YOUTHS TO SERVE

Kindergarteners to 12th graders

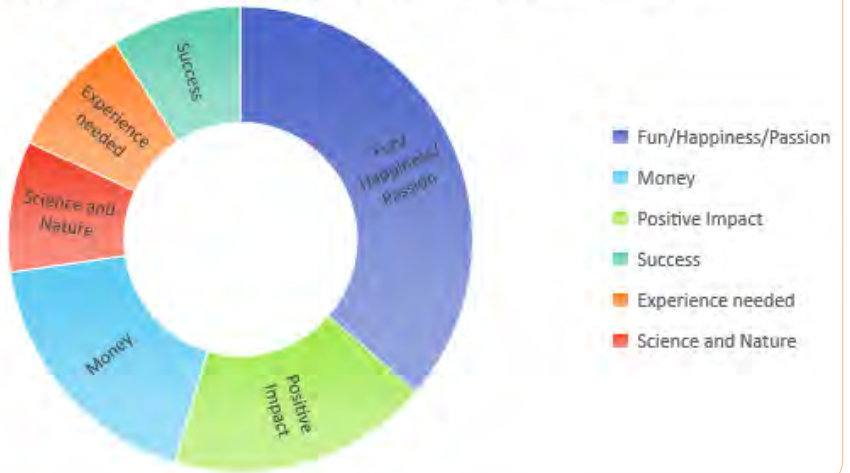
BARRIERS + SOLUTIONS

GOCO funds will provide educational supplies and materials, plants and tools for programs, and PR, marketing, and technology support. This will allow the program to provide opportunities for all youth, addressing the barrier of cost. The skills and knowledge developed in this program address the barrier of a lack of outdoor skills, which many in the community felt precluded them from connecting with the outdoors. Because the programming is held at the Boys & Girls Club, it addresses the barrier of connectivity, because most participants would be at the club regardless. Finally,

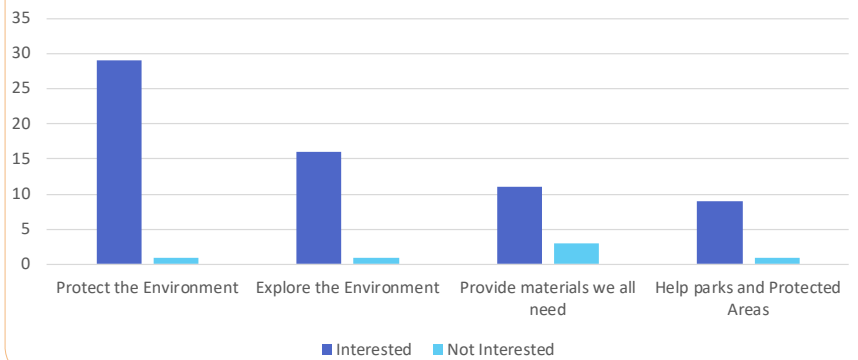
When I grow up I want to be a....



When I think about jobs for my kids I think of....



Career Pathways



PATHWAYS

LEARN + SHARE: HIGH SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION GUIDES

In the past, when Loveland Open Lands had only one program at one site for 5th graders to attend, high school students trained as presenters and helped teach the wildlife program to the 5th graders. It was a time when buses would stop at the high school, pick up the guides, then go to the elementary school and pick up the 5th grade students. As times and transportation availability changed, adult volunteer education guides were utilized to help adapt to the changes. This spring, 2017, two Front Range Community College students - a high school Junior and a Senior - acted as interns for our Environmental Education (EE) programs. Responses to the experience were very positive. GOCO funds would be used to help Loveland Open Lands continue hosting interns from Front Range CC and also recruit high school students from higher grade levels and AP courses to become education guides for younger children. With the close proximity of Mountain View High School to the Willow Bend Natural Area, transportation concerns are greatly reduced. In the past, our two-tiered approach resulted in five to ten students per year becoming interested in careers in natural resources, interpretation, or education and hopefully inspired even more 5th graders to pursue interests in natural resources. A few alumni are known to be in natural resource careers today.

YOUTHS TO SERVE

5th Graders, High School Students

BARRIERS + SOLUTIONS

The first barrier addressed by this project is reducing distance to a program site. The public feedback identified distance as a barrier to program and pathways participation, and feedback from older YAC members confirmed this barrier. Currently, too much time is required to travel from schools to program

sites, resulting in limited teaching time. Developing Willow Bend Natural Area addresses this barrier by providing an area in close proximity to a wide age range of students and offer programs that are in close proximity to schools and neighborhoods currently not within walking distance of an open natural area.

The second barrier is the time required to coordinate with additional schools, programs, volunteers, and High School guides within the project area. The requested Outreach Coordinator will play a major role in implementing these program and pathways and coordinating these stakeholders to maximize youth participation in this program.

The third barrier is absence of youth awareness and a lack of connection to teachers and administration regarding pathway opportunities created through this program. The past teacher pathway sponsors have mostly retired and new teachers are needed in order to give credit for time spent and to excuse students to participate with school supported excused absences. An additional duty of the part time coordinator will be to make contacts with these educators and give in-school recruiting presentations to students.

The fourth barrier addressed by this pathway opportunity is the lack of program materials beyond the site development. Many of the necessary program materials may be transferred as needed from other Open Lands sites and programs. Many of the handbooks etc. can be provided by Open Lands and printed in-house, but the benches, kiosks, and signs that are elements of our learning stations require financial support to be implemented. These costs are requested in the proposal for the Willow Bend site improvements.

GOCO funds will be used for program supplies and materials for high school students to teach elementary school programs, such as name tags, vests, notebooks, teaching materials and snacks.



COMMUNITY STEWARDSHIP PROJECTS

The goal of this program is to develop youth as environmental leaders in the Fort Collins area. This goal will be achieved by running youth programming that engages middle- and high-school students in hands-on service learning through stewardship projects and authentic leadership opportunities.

WRV's Youth and Inclusiveness Director will work with youth and/or local land agencies to identify 2 projects each serving 25 youth each year that meet real community needs, such as trail maintenance to improve access to natural/outdoor spaces; vegetating parks and trails; or removing invasive species. Projects will incorporate environmental education to connect scientific knowledge to place-based learning. These projects will also build tangible skills relevant to youth participants and will be embedded in the local community.

YOUTHS TO SERVE

Middle and High School students

BARRIERS + SOLUTIONS

GOCO funds will be used to ensure that all youth, regardless of experience or access to resources, are able to participate in WRV programming. WRV's current youth programming works primarily with young people in the Boulder/ Denver area, serving a population that is over 70% low-income or minority. Despite having an active presence in the Loveland area and despite interest from local school and youth groups, WRV has been limited in its ability to expand our youth programming into Loveland, primarily due to funding and staffing restrictions. Funding from GOCO will help WRV overcome that obstacle.

WRV will use funding to cover all aspects of the program, including tools, materials, program preparation and planning, individualized curriculum development, and providing healthy food. WRV works

closely with partners to ensure that reasonable expectations are set so that youth are able to test out new skills, safely push boundaries and expand comfort zones, and engage in new, fun, meaningful experiences in nature.

NATURAL RESOURCES CAREER FAIRS

The Natural Resources Career Fair at Mountain View High School will expose both high school and middle school students to natural resource careers. The fair will feature local natural resource agencies to discuss career opportunities as well as potential internships high school students could be eligible for. Students from Conrad Ball Middle School and New Vision School will also be invited to the fair to help them understand natural resources careers prior to selecting a career track they would engage in during high school.

Each invited agency or nonprofit group will staff a booth and provide information about the types of careers their agency might offer as well as an engaging activity for the students to participate in. A wide variety of natural resource management agencies at every governmental level exist in and around Loveland along with non-profit agencies dedicated to natural resources and the environment including: National Park Service; U.S. Forest Service; USDA wildlife and soil and crop research centers; U.S. Geologic Survey; Colorado Parks and Wildlife; Colorado State University; CSU Environmental Learning Center; Front Range Community College; State Forest Service; Larimer County Natural Resources; Larimer County Conservation Corps; Larimer County Search and Rescue; City of Loveland Parks & Recreation Department; Rocky Mountain Raptor Program; Bird Conservancy of the Rockies; Rocky Mountain Cat Conservancy and more.

Front Range Community College and Loveland Workforce Center will also participate in order to help students



understand how to access the kind of education that is required to attain a natural resource career.

The event will take place in the fall in each of the three grant years, in the MVHS gymnasium, and be open to all MVHS students as well as middle school students from Conrad Ball, High Plains, and New Vision, and will be particularly focused on students with interests in natural resources careers.

YOUTHS TO SERVE

Middle + High School students

BARRIERS + SOLUTIONS

GOCO funds will be used to bus middle school students from Conrad Ball, High Plains and New Vision schools to the career fair, eliminating the barrier of transportation. Funds will also be used for promotional materials, support materials including food, and giveaways to entice students to attend the event. Because the event will be held within Mountain View High School during normal school hours, it also addresses the barrier of programs and pathway events occurring at prohibitive times. Knowledge and awareness of natural resource career opportunities and how to attain them was identified through the planning process as a significant barrier to students choosing to seek out natural resources careers. A career fair specific to natural resources careers and what is needed to attain them will address this barrier by providing information and inspiration to students who may have an interest in pursuing natural resource careers.

OUTDOOR CAREER EXPLORATION EVENTS

Sylvan Dale Ranch is the perfect place to explore outdoor careers in an engaging and inspiring setting. Heart J Center and City of Loveland will partner on a series of outdoor career days entitled “Tools of the Outdoor Trades” taking advantage of the rich array of government agencies, universities, and environmental organizations located in Northern Colorado. Experts in a variety of fields will provide activities that give students a taste for outdoor scientific research, environmental education, land conservation, and other environmental/outdoor career paths. Students will have the chance to seek advice from the experts as to possible careers, best classes to take, college vs. trade school, and other practical advice. This effort will focus on Mountain View High School students (9th through 12th grades) The program will be used as a pilot for expansion to other schools throughout the region.

Likely partner agencies include Front Range Community College, Colorado State University, Denver University, University of Northern Colorado, Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife, US Geological Survey, US Forest Service, National Association for Interpretation, Association of Nature Center Administrators, Colorado Association of Environmental Education, Larimer County Open Lands, Colorado Open Lands, and similar agencies and organizations.

The goal of this Pathways activity is to expose young people from southeast Loveland to a wide array of outdoor and natural resource careers, let them experience what it’s like to be a forester, fisheries biologist, environmental educator, geologist, park ranger, ornithologist, etc. and get tangible advice on the various paths to these careers. The long-term goal is that many of these students will be inspired to pursue such careers.



YOUTHS TO SERVE

Mountain View High School students (9th - 12th grades)

BARRIERS + SOLUTIONS

GOCO funds will be used for buses from southeast Loveland to the ranch, instructor stipends, and facility rental from Sylvan Dale, though on a reduced cost/sliding scale basis. This addresses the barrier of cost and transportation, as well as provides new opportunities to develop knowledge and awareness of natural resource career opportunities and how to attain them, a barrier identified by numerous stakeholders.

To assemble an array of professionals for a hands-on career day requires a rich network of contacts and a location with varied terrain, habitats, and locations to provide numerous hands-on experiences in a real-world setting. Individual teachers at local schools may know some natural resource professionals, but might not have the diversity of contacts to make this career event a success on their own. Comments from educators throughout the planning process confirmed this notion. Staff members from Heart J Center and the City of Loveland have the required network of contacts, while Sylvan Dale Ranch provides the perfect setting for this event, giving youth the chance to experience outdoor careers in action.

AGRICORPS PROGRAM

Larimer County Conservation Corps aims to create additional opportunities for youth from the program area to participate in the AgriCorps program. The program is a part-time service learning opportunity for youth aged 14 to 16. They participate in a month-long summer program, where they: learn about sustainable agriculture and local food projects; volunteer at local farms and community gardens; and receive a monetary incentive upon completion of the program.

The crew funded through the grant would specifically target membership toward Mountain View High School students and students who attended the Boys & Girls Club of Larimer County. Crew leader applicants from previous years' crew will receive preference in hiring to continue providing leadership training opportunities in the Inspire community.

YOUTHS TO SERVE

Youth aged 14 - 16 years old

BARRIERS + SOLUTIONS

A key barrier to youth in this area participating in natural resource careers, according to community meetings and YAC feedback, is a lack of paid job opportunities for high school students in the natural resources sector. GOCO funds will be used to administer an additional 12-member AgriCorps crew in Larimer County. Adding additional AgriCorps crews through the three years of the program will significantly increase opportunities for students at Mountain View High School and the Boys & Girls Club to gain job experience and exposure to natural resource careers. The Corps provides Crew members with instruction on leadership/job skills as well as liability/insurance.

EDUCORPS PROGRAM

Larimer County Conservation Corps aims to create new opportunities for youth from the program area to participate in the EduCorps program. The program is a part-time service learning opportunity for youth aged fourteen to sixteen. They participate in a month-long programs during the summer, where they: learn about environmental education and interpretation; provide assistance and programming for host agencies; and receive a monetary incentive upon completion of the program.

The crew funded through the grant would specifically target membership toward Mountain View High School students and



students who attend/attended the Boys & Girls Club of Larimer County. EduCorps members would gain natural resource job experience and increase agency capacity for programming during the busy summer months.

YOUTHS TO SERVE

Mountain View High School students and those who attend/attended the Boys & Girls Club of Larimer County

BARRIERS + SOLUTIONS

A key barrier to youth in this area participating in natural resource careers is a lack of paid job opportunities for younger students in the natural resources sector. GOCO funds would be used to create a new EduCorps Crew, including administrative costs and stipends for participants. Adding an EduCorps crew through the three years of the program will significantly increase opportunities for students at Mountain View High School and the Boys & Girls Club to gain job experience and exposure to natural resource careers. The Corps provides Crew members with instruction on leadership/job skills as well as liability/insurance and a summer income.

CAREER PATHWAYS IN NATURAL RESOURCES + LANDSCAPE DESIGN INTERNSHIPS

Internships offered through Front Range Community College will allow older youth to gain valuable work experience in the field of Natural Resource Management, Environmental Education, and Landscape Design. Interns will assist with Project Outdoors outreach and educational activities. Interns will serve as mentors and educators to younger, less experienced students while gaining work experience, making connections with professionals, and refining their own professional work place skills. This program will create a natural path for younger students to get connected to older students and pursue some of the same paths that these older

students followed. Additionally, it will create an opportunity for job outlets for students who have participated in Project Outdoors, and will develop leadership skills among youth in our community. The goals of this program are to: 1) Employ two local youth ages 16-20 in paid internships on a semester basis (up to 12 students), and 2) to create mentorships, leadership, and career paths for youth in the community. Interested agencies who are committed to hosting FRCC interns include the City of Loveland, High Plains Environmental Center, Loveland Youth Gardeners, and Overland Mountain Bike Club.

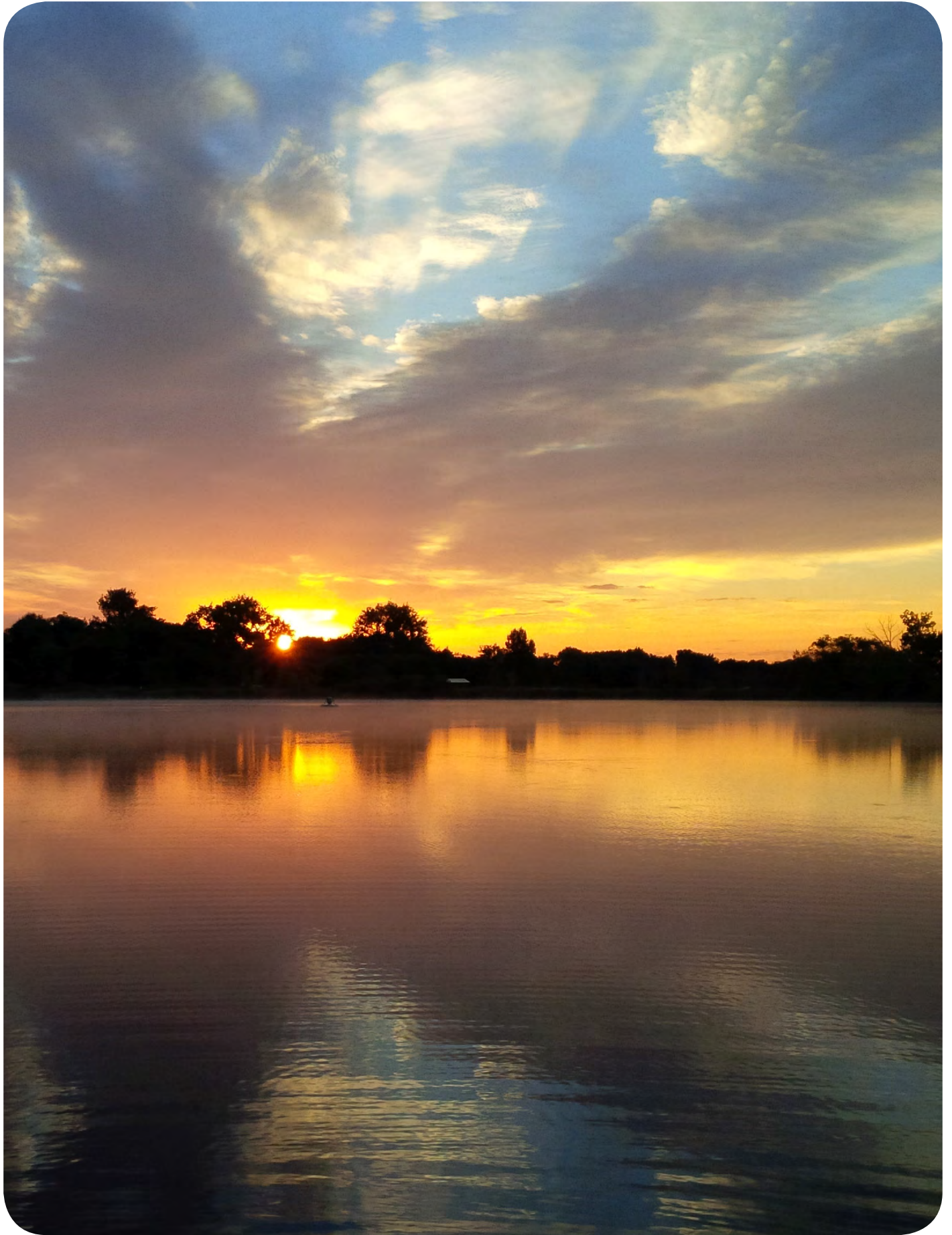
YOUTHS TO SERVE

Up to twelve local youth (students), ages 16 - 20

BARRIERS + SOLUTIONS

A significant barrier to youth trying to pursue a career in natural resources, according to community and YAC feedback, is the lack of seasonal jobs available for students under 21, and especially under 18. Students who express interest in natural resource careers and pursue education in natural resources are often dissuaded by the lack of available – and paying – jobs for younger employees. GOCO funds will be used to pay interns a program stipend. This program will allow younger students within our community to get paid to complete an internship that will build their resume and develop workforce readiness skills before they turn 21.







Rivers Edge Natural Area

Appendix

1. Planning Process Support Documentation
(stakeholder lists, meeting notes findings)
2. Preliminary Budget Estimate Tables

1. PLANNING PROCESS SUPPORT DOCUMENTATION

 Project Outdoors Teacher Contacts			
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Summary:

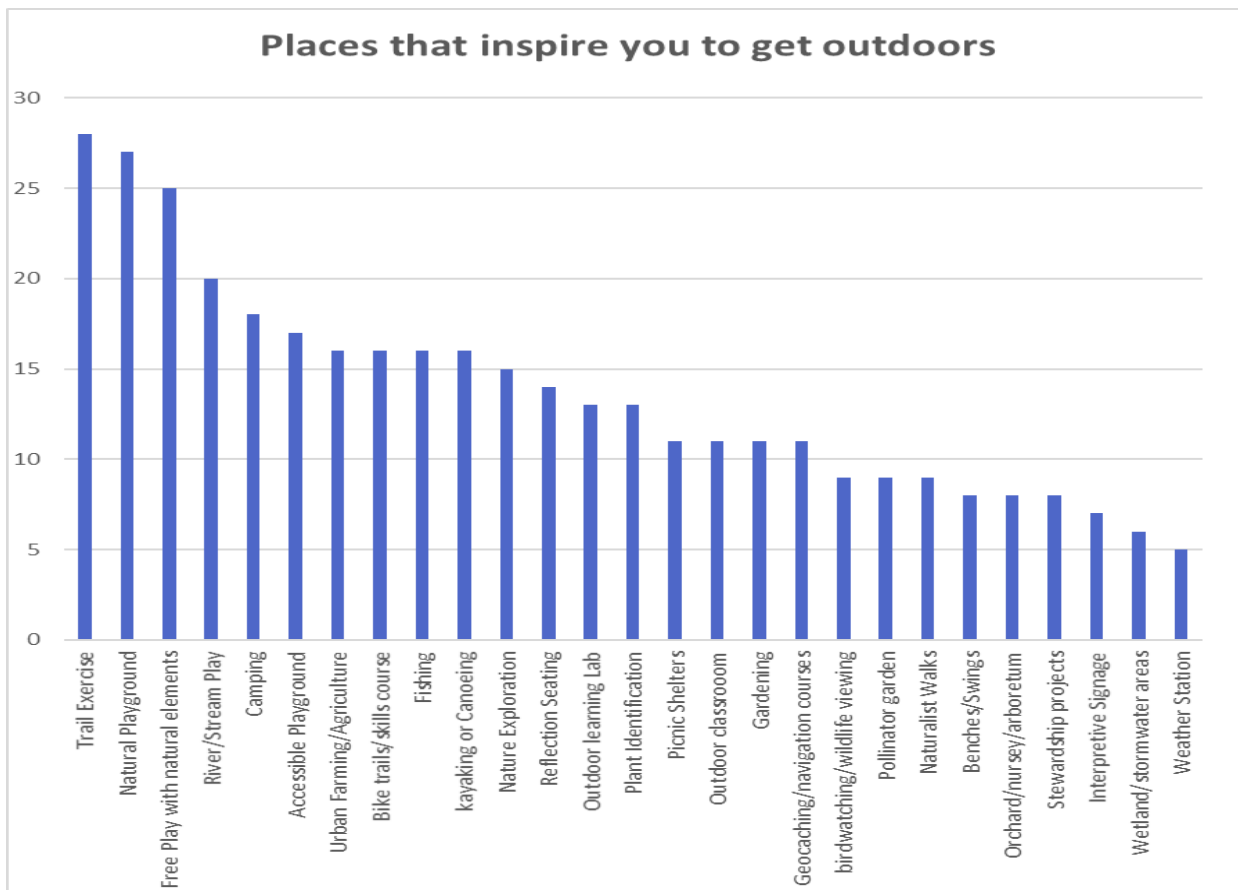
On January 24, 2017, a public meeting was held at the Loveland Boys and Girls Club to discuss and obtain feedback on the Project Outdoors: Plug in to Nature Loveland initiative. Approximately 85 citizens participated in the open house style meeting, including youth and adults of all ages and abilities. The initiative and feedback revolved around three main issues: Places, Programs, and Pathways.

1. Places *Build and enhance trails, access, and community hubs to get kids safely from their homes and into parks, natural areas and other public lands in order to cultivate curiosity and confidence*

- a. Participants were asked about improvements that could be made to the Loveland area to encourage youth and families to get outdoors. The results are below:



- i. The desires for area improvements were a mix of programs and places. Among the most desired programs were guided camping trips, outdoor education programs (especially for middle schoolers and those with special needs), guided hikes, evening events like s'mores in the park or astronomy classes, and a junior ranger program.
 - ii. The places that participants identified as needing improvement to facilitate youth involvement included a general desire for better connectivity and safer ways to bike, as well as more outdoor rock climbing options in parks. There was also a desire for community gardens, an outdoor equipment library, more horseback riding opportunities, and a natural water play area.
 - iii. Specific ideas to improve connectivity and safety included:
 1. Safer sidewalk from Chilson to Winona
 2. Rec Trail Spur from Denver Ave to Boyd Lake
 3. Safer options to cross Hwy 34 and the railroad
 4. More Bike Lanes, including CR 20
 5. Better kayak access to local lakes
- b. Participants were asked what places would inspire them to get outdoors. We received tremendous feedback for this section. The results are below:



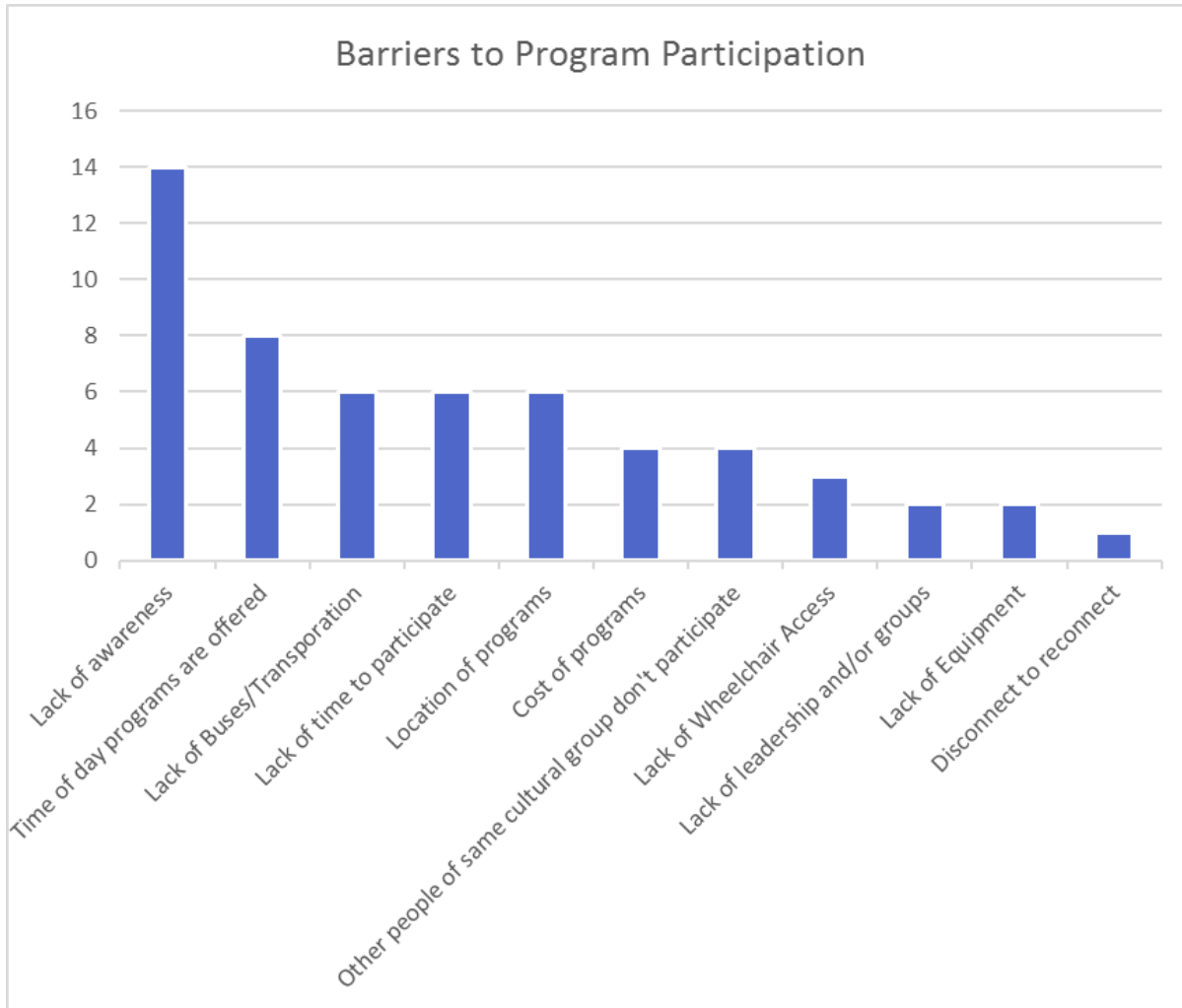
- i. Feedback on this section indicates some places may be far more effective in facilitating youth participation than others in Loveland. Again, general trail exercise, like walking a dog, was very popular. Free play in natural areas was also quite popular. Traditional recreational activities like camping, bike riding, fishing, and kayaking also scored highly. Handicap accessible playgrounds also generated substantial interest, which we found to be a theme throughout the feedback. Among the least popular options were weather stations, wetland areas, interpretive signage, and stewardship projects. There is a clear preference for active, but unsupervised recreation over less active and more controlled activities like weather stations.
- ii. Some participants expressed interest in themed parks, such as an '80s theme park or a movie theme park.
- c. Finally, participants were given 4 potential future places to spend time in their neighborhood and asked to choose which option they would be most likely to utilize. The results are below:



- i. The Bike Skills course was an overwhelmingly popular option. We received quite a bit of feedback about desires for the skills course. Desires included:
 - 1. Different courses for different skills/ages
 - 2. Road safety skills and education course
 - 3. Obstacle courses
- ii. In general, most participants had a desire for more neighborhood parks, so the E 1st St. Park received the second most votes.
- iii. Despite interest in other sections of the meeting, a community garden did not receive many votes here.
- iv. Similar to the results of “places that inspire you to get outdoors,” the option for natural areas with interpretive signage and learning stations was not very popular.

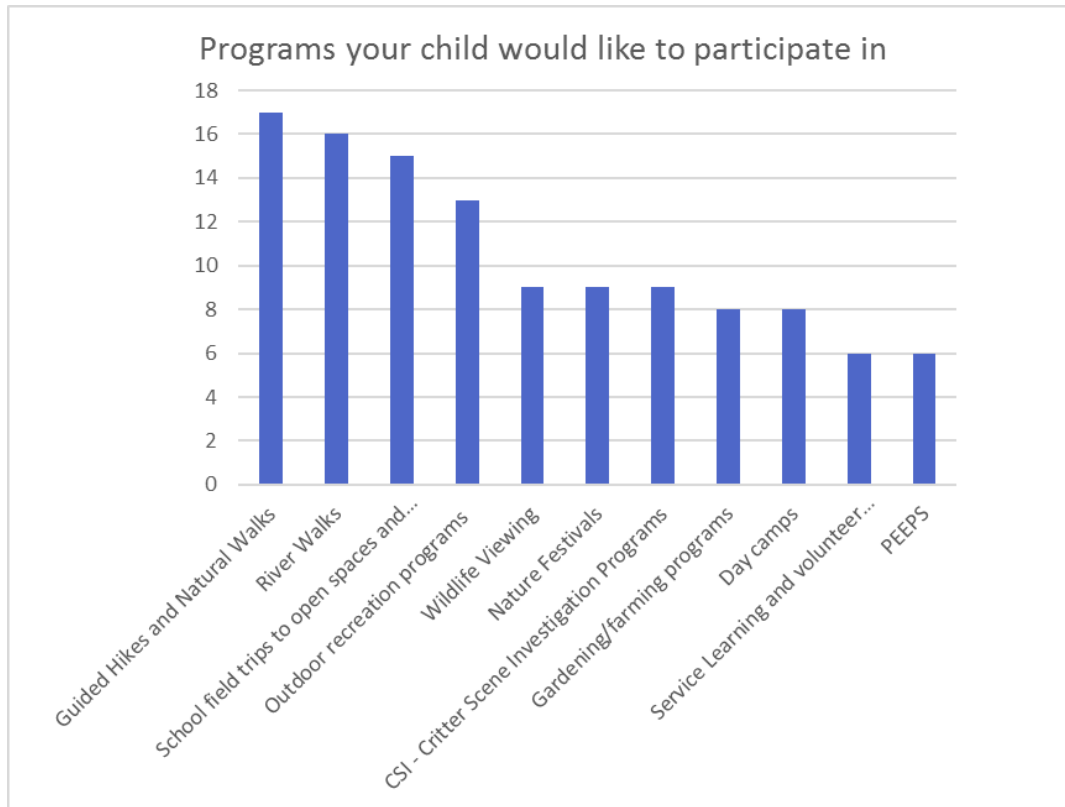
2. **Programs** Such as outdoor education and organized recreation experiences should help make places close to home come alive as well as provide opportunities for kids to play in and experience nature at more distant locations over time.

a. The public was asked to describe barriers to participation in nature. The results are below:



- i. Lack of awareness was highlighted as a major barrier to participation, indicating the marketing of nature programs should be improved. Cost, lack of transportation, and timing issues were also identified as significant barriers to participation.
- ii. Lack of wheelchair access was highlighted as a major barrier by some participants. Soft, narrow trails hinder the ability to get a wheelchair to many natural areas.
- iii. Some parents suggested offering a national or state parks pass that could be borrowed, a service which is currently offered by Poudre Public Library.

- b. Parents and children were asked what nature-related programs they would like children to participate in. The results are below:

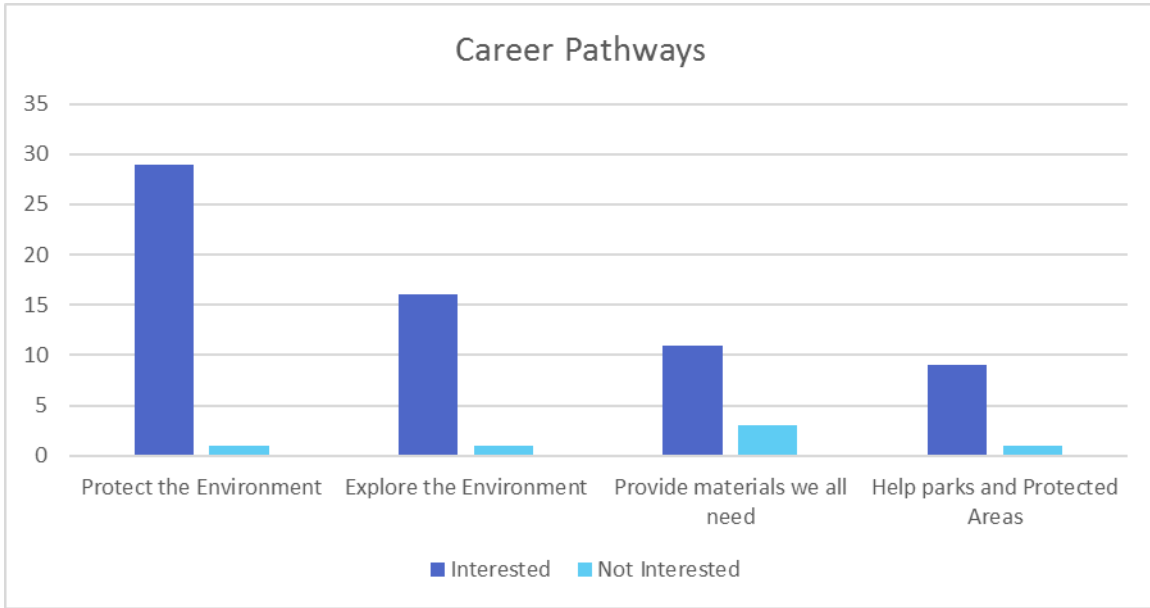


- i. The results show users are very interested in guided walks in natural and river areas. Along the same lines, field trips through schools to local open spaces generated interest. These high scoring options indicate participants desired guided educational programs that involve physical interactions with natural areas. Outdoor recreation programs, such as mountain biking or kayaking, also received significant interest.
- ii. Participants also indicated programs they are currently active in. Those included fishing clubs, hunting dog clubs, bike skills clinics, the PEEPS program, and the CSI program.

3. Career Pathways *Provide youth with opportunities to participate in outdoor service learning and stewardship projects as pathways to leadership and career opportunities.*

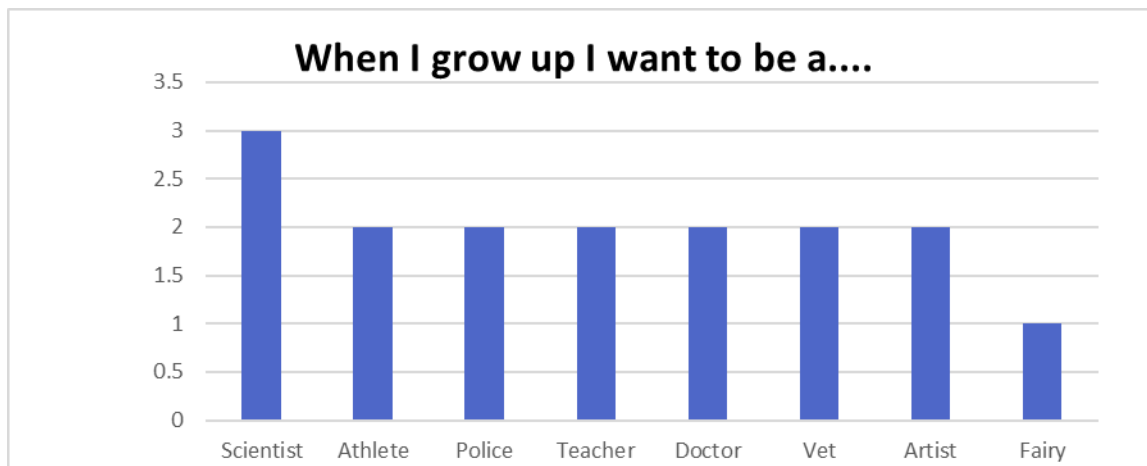
- a. Users indicated whether certain types of natural resource careers were interesting or not to them. The choices were:
 - i. *Explore the Environment*: Be a scientist and unravel questions about wildlife, aspects of the environment, and people’s interactions with nature.
 - ii. *Help Parks and Protected Areas*: Work at a protected area like RMNP and protect its visitors and environment as a ranger, environmental educator, etc.

- iii. *Protect The Environment*: Be a steward of our environment, working as a wildland firefighter, ecological restoration specialist, trail crew member, environmental advocate, etc.
- iv. *Provide Materials We All Need*: Provide materials we need for everyday life as a geologist, hydrologist, forester, or mining technician.

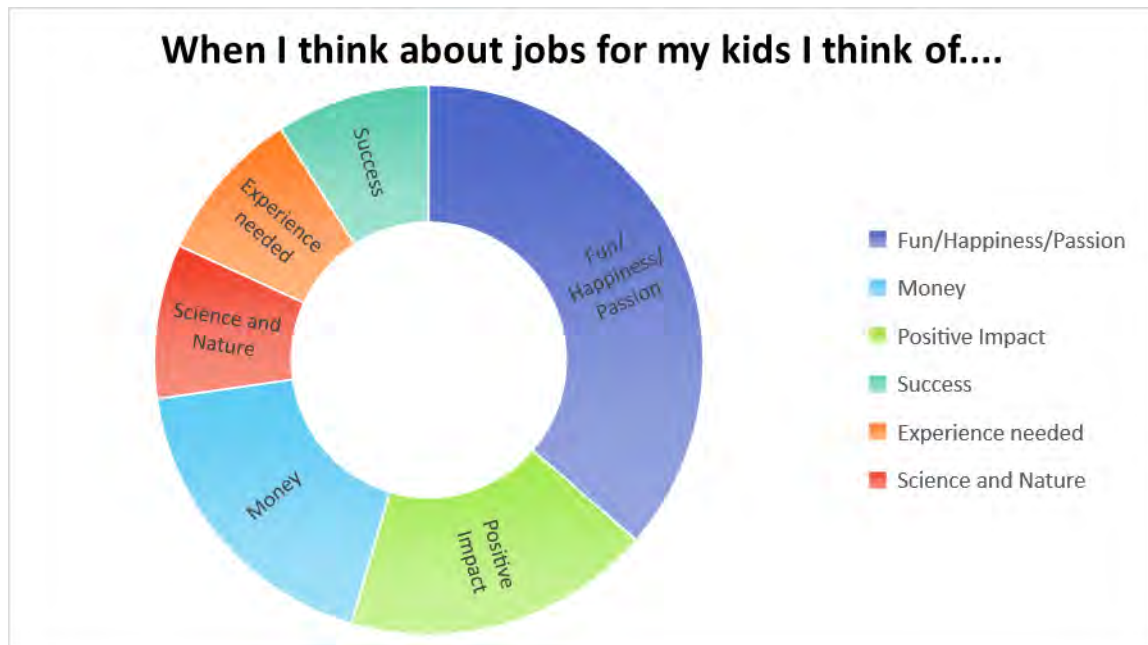


- v. Careers protecting the environment received overwhelming interest compared to the other options. Careers exploring the environment was in a far second place, and providing materials we all need was in third. The only option that received more than one “not interested” vote was for careers providing materials we all need, which received three “not interested” votes.

- b. Children at the event were asked what they wanted to be when they grow up. The results are below:



- c. Parents were asked the open ended question “When I think about jobs for my kids, I think of...”



- i. The results indicate parents have a clear desire for their children to experience happiness, fun and passion in their future careers. To a lesser extent, parents thought of money and making a positive impact. Experience Needed and Science and Nature were also mentioned.

Executive Summary:

Loveland community members provided their input on Places, Programs and Pathways to connect youth with nature. The results reveal substantial interest in certain area improvements and programs, and identify numerous current barriers to access. A common theme was a desire for more guided trips and programs, whether it be hikes, camping trips, or school field trips to open spaces. This contrasts with a major theme among the places that most inspired people to get outdoors: unguided play and exploration in natural areas. Other notable interests included access to water for fishing and kayaking, outdoor recreation programs such as mountain biking, and urban farming and agriculture. Among the most popular potential improvements was a bicycle skills course, as well as more trails and better connectivity, to improve bicycle safety throughout the city. Another notable theme that emerged was a need for handicap accessible places, including playgrounds and nature trails. The largest barrier to general access was simply a lack of awareness, which could be reduced through increased marketing and promotion of programs and places. The time and location of programs, as well as transportation options available, were also substantial barriers to access. The most popular career pathway was protecting the environment, indicating educational programs should utilize professionals that work in related stewardship positions. The information gathered at this meeting provides us a general idea of the improvements needed to get Loveland families and youth back into nature.

Takeaways:

Places:

- Trails, connectivity, bicycle safety
- Unguided play and exploration in natural areas
- Access to water for fishing and kayaking
- Bicycle skills course
- Parks/ natural playgrounds (accessible)

Programs:

- Guided trips and programs
 - hikes, river walks
 - camping trips/skills
 - school field trips to open spaces
- Outdoor recreation programs such as mountain biking
- Urban farming and agriculture

Pathways:

- Protecting the environment
 - professionals in stewardship-related positions

Project Outdoors Loveland Teacher Meeting Summary

A dozen local educators met with Project Outdoors Loveland on February 9, 2017 to offer input on how to better connect kids with the outdoors. Coming from elementary, middle and high school settings, with backgrounds ranging from special education to physical education, the group of teachers had diverse experiences and were able to identify barriers and solutions that impact a wide range of demographics. The educators were split up into small groups and asked to give their opinion on barriers and opportunities for improvement in Loveland's places, programs and pathways to nature.

The barriers created by transportation and common core standards emerged as themes throughout all three aspects of the Project Outdoors plan. The school district has limited funding and resources for busing, meaning trips can only occur between 9:30 and 2:00 pm, and the availability of buses and drivers is often insufficient to plan trips around the city or region. Common core standards are focused on improving performance on standardized tests in the areas of language arts and math, and teachers are facing increasing pressure to improve test scores in these areas, limiting the time and resources available for other subjects.

Places:

Build and enhance trails, access, and community hubs to get kids safely from their homes and into parks, natural areas and other public lands in order to cultivate curiosity and confidence

The educators unanimously agreed that school district restrictions on busing meant walking was often the only feasible way to travel from school grounds and into nature. Providing natural areas that are within walking distance to schools was therefore identified as an improvement that would facilitate children getting outdoors more. As many of the educators work with younger and/or developmentally and physically disabled children, they pointed out that long walks were not feasible either, so a natural area needed to be proximate and have safe connections for it to be used consistently by educators. The lack of bathrooms at natural areas was identified as a potential deal-breaker for many educators as well.

In addition to the barriers of transportation and restroom access, the educators also identified limited time as a restriction. Implementing field trips to parks, natural areas, and other public lands requires working around busy schedules and may require additional training or paperwork for the teacher. As such, many teachers were hesitant to use their scarce resources and time for field trips seemingly unrelated to their curriculum.

Many educators suggested using school grounds to create small nature areas in order to make nature more readily accessible and eliminate the barriers previously mentioned. Suggestions for specific nature areas on school grounds included creating worm composting areas, school gardens, creating an educational learning landscape, maintaining pollinator gardens and bee hives, installing bird feeders and bird cams, and using natural landscaping features like logs to create unstructured play areas. In addition to restrooms, the educators identified a need for shade, seating, and safe, contained areas when visiting natural areas with groups of children.

Programs:

Programs such as outdoor education and organized recreation experiences should help make places close to home come alive as well as provide opportunities for kids to play in and experience nature at more distant locations over time.

Given the barriers of transportation, time, and limited teacher resources, the educators indicated that having programs come to the schools was the best possible scenario. There was some debate between participants on whether providing a range of programs or having repeat programs was preferable. Some participants stated that programs that come regularly are often far more interesting to students, while others preferred to have a range of programs offerings, so they could choose programs related to the unit they were currently teaching. In addition, sensory or hands-on programs build the most interest, especially those that included charismatic attention getters, like horses, dogs, or Smokey Bear. They expressed an interest in creating partnerships with organizations and agencies such as Rocky Mountain National Park, Sylvan Dale, REI, University of Northern Colorado, and Colorado State University. The educators envisioned options such as park rangers or wildlife biologists coming to schools to teach programs that match district standards and that coincide with units teachers are currently working on.

The educators offered examples of programs they have successfully implemented to get kids outdoors and appreciating nature. One program required students to spread out along a river corridor and spend a half-hour quietly journaling. Many students reflected that they had never spent so long simply taking in the sights, sounds, and smells of nature. Other educators mentioned planning programs based on the season and available resources, such as planting pollinator gardens on school grounds in the spring. In addition, they suggested connecting schools that have similar programs, so that teachers can pool their knowledge and resources and students could participate in scaffolding programs from elementary through high school.

The participants had numerous suggestions for before and after school programming as well. These included offering guided camping programs for local families, teaching outdoor skills to kids, offering night time hikes, and offering farm-to-table programs with produce grown by students. However, the educators cautioned that early childhood and special needs students cannot always participate in after-school programming. The participants also suggested creating a gear library that would allow families or educators to borrow equipment for a single program without having to make significant investments.

The barriers to program implementation identified by the participants included the same transportation and time issues as mentioned previously. Barriers also included a general lack of awareness of current programs by teachers and families. One suggestion to reduce this barrier involved targeting new teacher orientation as an opportunity to get the word out about available programs. Additionally, the educators mentioned an overcautious, “can’t do that” attitude towards new and unfamiliar programs within the local school district. Finally, the educators stated that they often need outside support and materials to implement or participate in new programs.

Pathways

Pathways provide youth with opportunities to participate in outdoor service learning and stewardship projects as pathways to leadership and career opportunities

The educators suggested a range of approaches to facilitate natural resource career interest among Loveland’s youth. One popular method involved getting professionals into schools to show students what possibilities exist through career days/fairs. Local professionals from Larimer County Conservation Corps or rangers from Rocky Mountain National Park were suggested as potential resources for this method. While some stated that bringing students to natural resource professionals in the community would be most effective, the issue of transportation limits the potential of that suggestion. The participants stated that teaching job skills shows students the pragmatic nature of natural resource careers.

The educators were also interested in creating mentoring programs and relevant clubs. The mentoring programs could take the shape of high schoolers mentoring younger students on environmental issues, or professionals mentoring teachers on how to implement programs like pollinator gardens or worm composting programs.

The extra work associated with coordinating career pathways for teachers was identified as a barrier. Providing a list of available resources to teachers could mitigate this concern. These resources should include a list of local professionals who can discuss specific

content, places to go, and activities to do in the Loveland area. Incorporating common core standards with career pathway education was also seen as a barrier. Finding creative ways to tie career pathways into these subjects will make them far more likely to be utilized by teachers.

Executive Summary:

A multitude of barriers and potential and existing solutions were described at the meeting. However, the issues of transportation, restroom access, and standardized testing priorities were clearly the most common barriers that educators identified as keeping their students from connecting with nature. Given the economic and time-related transportation constraints, the educators advocated for bringing nature to the schools, in the form of professionals coming to classrooms to guest lecture, or altering the built environment in and around schools to make it more “natural” and educational. Simple alterations to existing natural areas, such as building restrooms or providing more trees or shelters for shade could also facilitate increased usage by educators. After-school programming, such as outdoor or nature clubs, also generated interest, along with a gear library and guided programs to teach outdoors skills. Many educators stated that standardized testing took precedence over field trips or other environmental education, which is an institutional issue that could partially be addressed by the Colorado Environmental Education Plan (CEEP), which most participants were unfamiliar with. Programs aligned with state standards, current educational units and seasons would be welcomed by educators. More collaboration between schools and environmental organizations such as High Plains Environmental Center, Larimer County Conservation Corps and local colleges and universities could be valuable for the pathways and programs components of this project, with possible internships, credits and stipends for participating students. Providing teachers with information on available environmental education resources generated significant interest amongst participants. Given their diverse experiences and backgrounds, the educators provided unique insights into how to improve programs, places, and pathways to nature in Loveland.

Feedback from April 2017 Winona Elementary School online survey – students, teachers, parents

1) If I could design my dream playground for Winona it would include the following (24 responses)

- A bridge, more swings maybe a tire swing, instead of wood chips do that flat rubbery stuff so cleaning is easy and maybe a tunnel or two.
- Get rid of the woodchips
- Rock Wall, Merry Go Round, Pavilion with a roof, playhouse, lines for the baseball field and soccer field, track, chair swings, sand box, trees, smaller monkey bars for younger kids, jungle gym, Rope climbing, more slides.
- A big garden to play in, lots of imagination-encouraging structures (things that don't have a given purpose like rocks that could be islands, castles, cows, whatever the imagination decides!)
- I like the playground they have now other than the wood chips. I would love for the playground to have rubber matting, instead of wood chips.
- more buddy benches, longer monkey bars, bigger slides, sandboxes for smaller kids
- Bean bag toss, outdoor classrooms, mounds and tunnels, shaded area, pavilion, outdoor eating area, outdoor stage, brightly painted play areas like foursquare, tic tac toe, hopscotch, basketball goal opposite existing so real games can be played, working outdoor kitchen, separate area for preschool and kinders, suspended bridge, rock wall, running track, easy access monkey bars, climbing rope
- an obstacle course with multi size bars, rock walls, and bridges to do parkour. It would also be awesome to connect the red and purple equipment.
- zipline
- zipline and merry go round
- an obstacle course, a merry-go-round, a trampoline, and spinning seats
- a bunch of trampolines and a place to do parkour.
- go carts and trampoline and a place to do parkour
- field goal posts at each end of the field and yardage lines so we can play football games
- merrygoround and a pokemon tournament stadium
- A little zip line for kids to go on from one platform to another and a trampoline in the field with a certain number of students on it at a time.

- rope ladder, rock wall, zipline, obstacle course
- bounce house that is a obstacle and is a race
- Something safe and clean for the ground cover. An area that would be very appropriate for early childhood/kindergarten exploration with a sandbox as well as areas for older kids. Areas that increase gross and fine motor skills like stepping stones, mazes, things to manipulate with hands. A natural area with trees and a path way with natural places to sit along the path. A space or multiple spaces that would invite family/school gatherings for an evening picnic, outdoor classroom opportunities or story time.
- More swings, rubber matting on the ground because wood chips hurt when you fall on them.
- A huge slide
- Grass to run and play that doesn't have holes in it. With goals that don't have holes in them and bigger equipment as we have typically have about 500 students which means lots of kids out on the playground at a time. Some black top paint for games the kids can play and actual equipment that is not flat, broken or missing pieces. It would be wonderful to have an outdoor classroom area where the students can learn about healthy eating, plant science and basic nutrition. Our student come from very traumatic backgrounds and low-income families and don't have access to this.
- Slides, nice basketball and field for kickball/soccer. Equipment that is fun to play in but not so challenging it's hard for many younger kids to use it.

2) It would be exciting to see our outdoor school grounds include the following (examples community garden, running track, community gathering area, kinder/pre-school play spaces, outdoor classroom, outdoor kitchen etc) (20 responses)

- Outside classroom. A gazebo sitting area for teachers to do lunches with students on nice days. More things so little kids can play with their imaginations like a house or "cafe"
- Combined outdoor classroom and community garden.
- Running track, more climbing things
- We would like to have a garden and compost. We would like to have a track to run on as well as a pavilion with a roof to have lunch under with your class.
- ALL OF THE ABOVE! What an exciting opportunity!

- An outdoor classroom and a community garden would be great. The classes teach a lot about how things grow so it would be great to have hands on learning experience.
- garden, running track,
- lots of personal equipment like jump ropes, Skip its, soft balls in different sizes, outdoor art spaces, recycled tires painted and filled with dirt and planted with sturdy grass.
- a baseball field and football right ups
- a community garden would be nice and would teach other kids how to work together as a community.
- fun stuff
- it would be exciting because then we would kick field goals and be able to play actual games
- a dinosaur themed playground
- I would be excited to see a fake kitchen there for kids to play with because it would be a great opportunity for kids to engage!!!! thanks for considering my idea. because we could eat out side
- climbing wall, stepping stone type things, trees and other natural areas, some type of outdoor tiered sitting area like a small amphitheater.
- Community garden and outdoor classroom.
- Kindergarten space
- Outdoor classroom, community garden, track so the kids aren't trying to run in the lumpy grass. Separate spaces for kinder and upper grades so the littlest aren't getting hurt accidentally and/or purposefully by the big kids. Preschool equipment. Outdoor kitchen with community area to promote positive school/home relationships. Music garden with instruments.
- Outdoor classroom, garden, nice field



Winona Elementary Outdoor Improvement Survey Results

April 21, 2017 - Winona Elementary School, Loveland, CO

Introduction:

In order to gather community and youth feedback regarding potential improvements to Winona Elementary School grounds, Loveland Project Outdoors prepared a simple survey for Winona parents and students to participate in. The survey asked participants to vote for the outdoor improvements they would like to see most. Potential improvements were determined through results of an initial, online-based survey sent to Winona students, parents, and teachers. Out of the 30+ online responses, 8 potential improvements were identified. Each participant at the Winona Carnival was given 3 votes to distribute among the potential improvements. Approximately 70 Winona students and parents participated in the survey at the Winona Carnival on April 21, 2017.

Results:



Analysis:

The results of the survey indicated an overwhelming interest in 1 potential improvement, strong interest in 2 options, and low interest in the 5 remaining options. “An outdoor adventure area with a challenge course and natural elements to climb on” received 55 votes, more than twice the votes as any other option. “Additional slides, swings, and monkey bars” received strong support with 26 votes, and “a community garden and composting area” received 24 votes, meaning both had substantial support. Combined, these three options received more than half of the total votes. The other options – identified through the initial online survey - including a covered outdoor classroom, separate play areas for younger kids, lines painted on blacktop for basketball, better grass and sports fields, and a running track. These options received between 6 and 12 votes, indicating far less interest compared to other improvements.



Prioritization Feedback

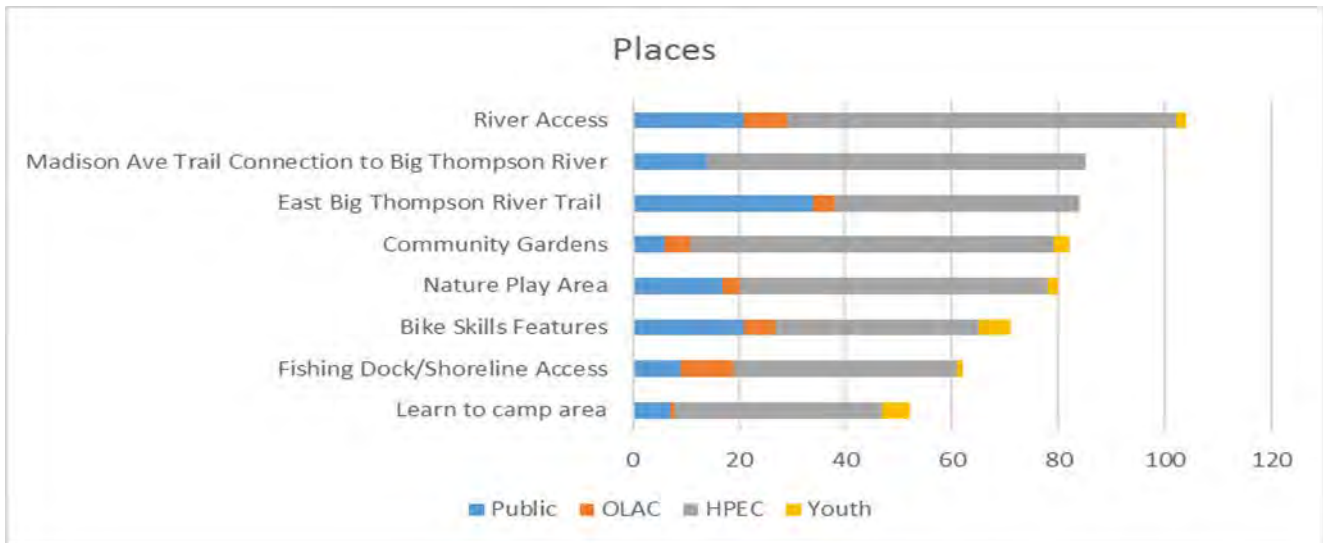
May 9-13, 2017

Introduction:

The Loveland Project Outdoors coalition gathered feedback from public stakeholders at three events during the week of May 8, 2017. On May 9, the coalition, along with the Youth Advisory Council (YAC), held a public event at the Loveland Boys and Girls Club, which had over 20 participants including parents, youth, and local community members. On May 10, the coalition gathered feedback from the Open Lands Advisory Commission, a 10-member citizen advisory group which makes recommendations to city concerning the use and management of open space, natural areas, wildlife habitat, and other associated open land issues in Loveland. On May 13, the coalition gathered feedback at the grand opening of the new High Plains Environmental Center in Loveland - a partner program provider - where over 140 community members offered their input. Participants at all three events were given a limited number of votes for the options within each category (Places, Programs, and Pathways). Youth Advisory Council members also solicited feedback from their peers using a variety of survey means.

Places:

The Places category included 8 options for participants to choose from. These include: Madison Ave Trail Connection to Big Thompson River, East Big Thompson River Trail, River Access, Community Gardens, Nature Play Area, Bike Skills Features, Fishing Dock and Pond Shoreline Access, and a “learn-to-camp area.” These options were chosen using feedback from previous public meetings, YAC member feedback, and coalition meetings. Each participant received 4 votes to spread among the 8 options. The results are summarized below:

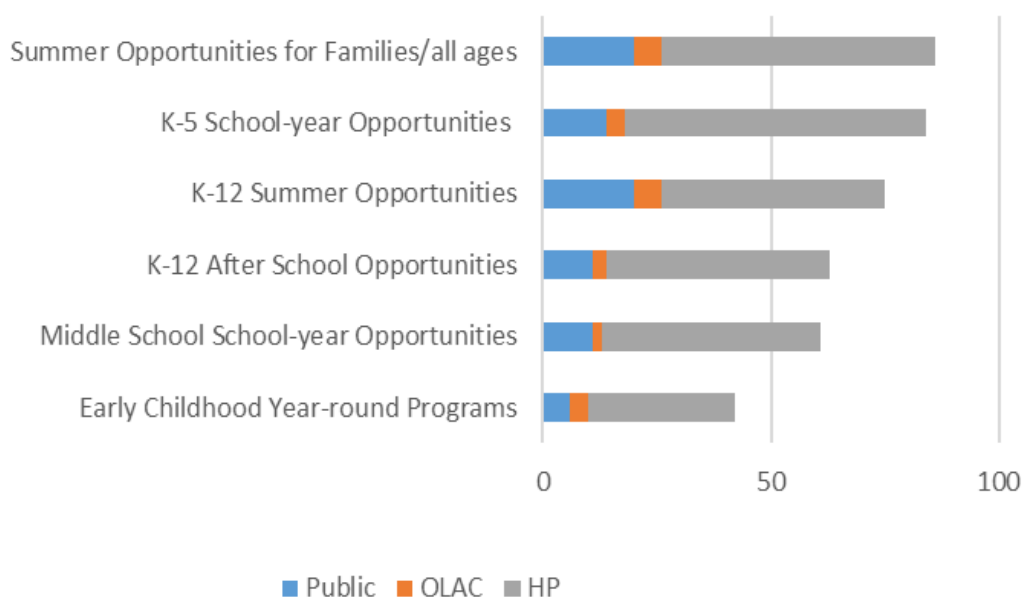


When all input is considered collectively, River Access emerged as the most popular option in the places category among participants, indicating an interest in water-based natural play and exploration. Both the Madison Ave trail and East Big Thompson River Trails had substantial support, demonstrating a strong interest in providing safer connectivity and additional trail opportunities. The options of Community Gardens and a Nature Play area were close behind as the fourth and fifth most popular options, respectively. This points towards a strong interest in hands-on natural activities with potential educational components. Bike skills features also received considerable support, indicating interest in active outdoor options. The options of a fishing dock and a learn-to-camp area received less support, possibly representing less interest in activities that require specific gear and knowledge to enjoy.

Programs:

The programs category had 6 options, and each participant was given 3 votes. The options included Summer Opportunities for Families, Elementary Age School-year Programs, K-12 Summer Opportunities, K-12 After-School Opportunities, Middle-School School-year Opportunities, and Early Childhood Year-round Programs. Examples of what these programs might entail were given under each option. The relative feasibility, people to be served, and associated costs were provided as well. The results are below:

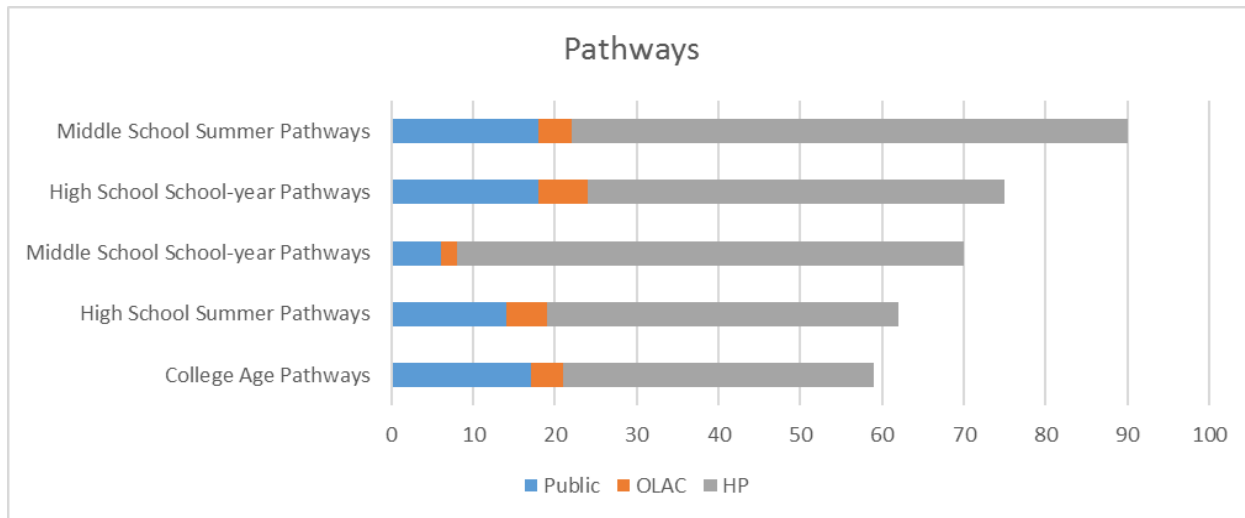
Programs



The options of Summer Opportunities for Families and K-5 School-year Opportunities appeared to have the strongest public support, and K-12 Summer Opportunities came in a close third. Summer opportunities for families included potential programming such as guided hikes and stewardship opportunities, nature-based, hands-on clinics, and other activities that build outdoor skills and foster family relationships. K-5 school-year opportunities included field trips to expand outdoor learning opportunities, curriculum integration with field trips and other hands-on activities, and summer break stipends for teachers to help coordinate an environmental education-based curriculum. The options for K-12 summer opportunities included potential programming such as on- and off-site outdoor activities at the Boys and Girls club, field trips and programming by local environmental organizations, and activities to support team-building, self-confidence, and outdoor leadership skills. Two of these three top-scoring options covered a broad spectrum of potential participants and take place during summer, which may explain their relative popularity at these mid-May events. The other options received significantly less support, and primarily covered programming during the school year.

Pathways

The pathways category includes 5 options to facilitate natural resource career development: Middle School Summer Pathways, High School Summer Pathways, Middle School School-Year Pathways, High School School-Year Pathways, and College Age Pathways. Each option included relative information on feasibility, people to be served, and cost, as well as direct examples of what each option might entail. Every participant was given 3 votes to use among these 5 options. The results are below:



Middle School Summer Pathways was a very popular option among participants. This option could include natural resource career development through teen stewardship camps, Larimer County Conservation Corps' AgriCorps Crew, and other programs that provide job skills, hands-on work experience, environmental awareness and community engagement for 6th, 7th, and 8th graders. In a distant second was High School School-year Pathways, which could include opportunities such as career days/fairs, training in resume-writing and job skills, and internships that grow participants' knowledge of careers such as natural resources, environmental education, and landscape design. Surprisingly, high school summer pathways, which included aspects like summer internships at Larimer County Conservation Corps, received far less interest than its middle-school summer equivalent. Following this trend, College Age pathways received the fewest votes, despite potentially providing internships through the city of Loveland, Larimer County, or other providers like Larimer County Conservation Corps. As the


pathway options became more directed towards providing actual natural resource job positions, it actually drew less interest from participants. Internships may be viewed as less desirable than paid jobs in natural resources, even if stipends are provided, possibly due to the need for older students to earn money for college and other expenses.

Executive Summary

The Loveland Project Outdoors coalition was able to gather significant public feedback from these events and surveys. In total, nearly 200 local parents, students, and community members offered their feedback and suggestions, which will inform the prioritization we give these options going forward. The Places feedback indicates a desire for natural play areas and access, as well as improvements in the connectivity of the area. The Programs feedback shows interest in summer programming for all ages, and more field trips for elementary students. The Pathways feedback indicates a desire to develop natural resource career values and job skills year-round at the middle school level, and during the school year for older students. This information will be very useful as we determine which features best meet the needs and budget of the GOCO grant as well as the needs and desires of southeast Loveland's community.

Early Childhood (Preschool)





Year-round







- Support for PEEPs (Preschool Environmental Education Programs) currently offered to the public at Loveland Library and local natural areas and parks.
- Expand PEEPs to other sites and early childhood centers at local schools.
- Provide support for parents to increase comfort level with preschool children outdoors/in backyard.

Examples:

- Add monthly PEEPs programs at Winona Early Childhood Center
- Offer monthly preschool PEEPs programs at new E. 1st St. Natural Area
- Demonstrate hands-on outdoor learning activities for preschoolers and parents

People to be Served	Feasibility	Cost
 Families  Preschool	 easy	 low

Elementary School (K-5th Grade)

School-year Opportunities



- Field trip series beginning in kindergarten and leading up to 5th grade experience to expand outdoor learning opportunities.
- Curriculum integration with field trips and hands-on learning activities to support state educational standards.
- Summer break stipends for teachers helping to coordinate environmental education curriculum.

Examples:

- Nature-based field trips
- Classroom/school-based programs
- Hands-on learning opportunities
- Gardening/planting projects (vegetables, native plants, trees)
- Plains to foothills continuum






People to be Served	Feasibility	Cost
 Elementary School	 medium	 medium

Middle School (6-8th Grade)

School-year Opportunities



- Nature-based educational field trips and school-based programs to expand experiential learning opportunities.
- Curriculum integration with field trips and hands-on learning activities to support state educational standards.
- Partnerships with high schools on nature-based learning projects and programs.

Examples:

- Field trips to local natural areas integrated with curriculum (science, GPS/orienteering, art, writing)
- Hands-on learning opportunities
- Educational school gardens
- Plains to foothills continuum
- Bird/wildlife monitoring projects







People to be Served	Feasibility	Cost
 Middle School  High School	 medium	 medium

Elementary, Middle & High School (K-12th Grade)





After-school Opportunities








- Outdoor program/club at Boys & Girls Club including on- and off-site outdoor activities.
- Field trips and programs by local outdoor/environmental organizations.
- Activities to support and develop team-building, self-confidence, and outdoor leadership skills.
- Boys & Girls Club staff support and training.

Examples:

- Hiking, biking, fishing
- Gardening (vegetables, native plants)
- Nature exploration
- Low elements challenge course, team-building activities

People to be Served	Feasibility	Cost
 Elem. School  Middle School  High School	 easy	 medium

Elementary, Middle & High School

Summer Opportunities



- Continuation of outdoor program/club at Boys & Girls Club including on- and off-site outdoor activities.
- Field trips and programs with local outdoor/environmental organizations.
- Activities to develop team-building, self-confidence, and outdoor leadership skills.
- Backyard to backcountry continuum of experiences.
- Boys & Girls Club staff support and training.
- Counselor training program for older youth.

Examples:

- Hiking, biking, fishing, camping activities
- Outdoor gear library
- Gardening programs (vegetables, native plants)
- Nature exploration, art, journaling
- Service learning projects (bird boxes, native plantings)






People to be Served	Feasibility	Cost
 Elem. School  Middle School  High School	 medium	 medium

Summer Opportunities for Families / All Ages



- Guided hikes, interactive nature programs and stewardship activities.
- Hands-on clinics and instruction by local outdoor recreation organizations.
- Activities to build outdoor skills, confidence, and self-reliance.
- Family relationship-building through outdoor recreation and adventure.

Examples:

- Hiking, biking, fishing, camping skills clinics
- Outdoor gear library
- Gardening programs (vegetables, native plants)
- Guided hikes, bird & plant identification, wildlife tracking/monitoring, evening programs
- Citizen science & stewardship projects







People to be Served	Feasibility	Cost
 Families  All ages  Neighborhood	 medium	 medium

Middle School (6-8th Grade) School-year Pathways

- Career Day and guest presentations by professionals in natural resources.
- Training in job skills, social skills, interviewing.
- Pair 8th grade students with college-age interns to share college and career inspiration.

Examples:

- Loveland Open Lands, Larimer Co. Natural Resources and Conservation Corps, CSU, CO Parks & Wildlife, US Forest Service, Bird Conservancy, High Plains Env. Ctr. professionals
- Front Range Community College Internship partnership
- Larimer County Workforce Center job skills training

People to be Served Middle School	Feasibility ✓ easy	Cost \$ low
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Middle School (6-8th Grade) Summer Pathways

- use local resources for a service project.
- Community garden stewardship, a junior counselor or career advisor role.
- Garden in rows for the Hungry, which provides produce for low-income residents.

Examples:

- Boys & Girls Club Outdoor Club
- Youth garden programs
- Larimer County Conservation Corps' Agriculture Crew
- City of Loveland tree stewardship and urban forestry
- Team-building outdoor challenges

People to be Served Middle School	Feasibility ✓ medium	Cost \$ medium
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High School (9-12th Grade) School-year Pathways

- Career and college visitation with professionals in natural resources
- Training in skills, resumes, interviewing, internships
- Internships and classes to gain experience and education in natural resources environment

Examples:

- CU at Front Range College visits
- Larimer County Workforce Center job skills training
- Front Range College internships
 - teach environmental education
 - assist in land management area and research
 - help with native vegetation and reforestation
- River Water Quality

People to be Served High School	Feasibility ✓ easy	Cost \$ low
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High School (9-12th Grade) Summer Pathways

- Summer opportunities with Larimer County Conservation Corps.
- Outdoor service learning/volunteer stewardship opportunities.
- Community garden programs provide job skills, hands-on work experience, environmental stewardship, and community engagement.
- Counselor training program at Boys & Girls Club.
- Stipends for students to help run outdoor gear library.

Examples:

- Boys & Girls Club Outdoor Club
- Larimer County Conservation Corps' Agricorps and Land Corps Crews
- Local youth gardening programs
- Loveland Open Lands volunteer projects – trailbuilding, planting, invasive weed removal

People to be Served High School	Feasibility ✓ medium	Cost \$ medium
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College Age Pathways

- opportunities to participate in college level programs in natural resources and career preparation
- Create a CU-Warner College Diversity Fellowship to provide financial assistance to natural resources bachelor's degree
- annual Natural Resources Career Fair
- opportunities to train with Larimer County Conservation Corps

Examples:

- Larimer County Conservation Corps' Intern Sawyer Crews
- FRCC classes provide internships
- Career Fairs at CU / FRCC

People to be Served College	Feasibility ✓ medium	Cost \$ medium
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May 9, 2017 Prioritization Event Pathways Posters



Winona Elementary School Teacher Feedback

On May 24, 2017 Loveland Parks and Recreation Department staff met with 10 educators from Winona Elementary school to discuss potential improvements to the school that could facilitate outdoor learning and improve the connection that Winona students feel with nature. Two employees of the Thompson R2-J School District Facilities Department were also in attendance.

The meeting began with a simple question for the educators: How could outdoor time and experiences at Winona be improved? The teachers overwhelmingly agreed that there was a lot of wasted space on the school's property. This space, primarily located in the northern portion of the property, is unusable because it borders private property with horses and has only a small fence separating the properties, so children are told to keep away from that area. A larger fence would improve the safety and usability of this school open space. The educators also had suggestions on how to use this open space more effectively. A meandering "track" or walking path was suggested, which could serve many purposes. A walking club that currently exists at Winona could use the path before/after school, the gym teacher could use it for outdoor lessons, and a 5th grade teacher pointed out that the older students enjoy having space to walk and socialize, and the meandering track would provide a safe place for this activity to occur on school grounds.

The conversation then turned to which improvements could provide educational opportunities for teachers to connect their curriculum with nature and outdoor-based themes. A very popular option was an outdoor classroom or pavilion. If it provided shade and was located on a part of school grounds with minimal distractions, the teachers felt it would be a

wonderful tool to engage their students with the outdoors. The educators suggested placing this in the northeast end of the property to reduce distractions. The Thompson R2-J School District staff members offered a few suggestions for this pavilion, including stamping the concrete with life-size wild animal paw prints for science lessons or stamping angles and measurements in the concrete for math lessons. This improvement would be useful because there are very few shaded areas on the Winona school grounds, which limits teachers' willingness to bring students outdoors on nice spring and fall days. A simple improvement that teachers claimed could facilitate geography and social studies lessons would be to re-paint the large map of the United States in the school yard.

Another educational opportunity that was suggested by teachers was a community garden. This garden could be the traditional raised-bed style or a growing "dome" or greenhouse which regulates water and temperature automatically, reducing the need for community assistance during the summer. School district staff indicated that a number of other schools in the district had taken the path of installing a growing dome with success. However they did warn that water could be an expensive or difficult issue depending on where the gardens were located. The school or PTA would likely be responsible for funding the water bill associated with any community garden. The teachers suggested donating vegetables to local food pantries, providing potential civics and economics lesson for students. Another related suggestion was to create a native plant area, which could be located in the middle of the meandering "track." This could allow students to learn about native and invasive species, life zones, and natural resource management. School district staff provided information and guidelines for outdoor classrooms and school gardens that the district has compiled for schools to follow when planning these learning landscapes.

The Winona teachers agreed that improving the school facilities would be the easiest way to facilitate consistent educational and unstructured activities with nature and outdoor components. Field trips and the associated off-site transportation are difficult to fit into busy schedules and are prohibitively expensive, so providing opportunities to connect with the outdoors on-campus is much more ideal. The teachers were interested in any improvements to the school grounds that would encourage students to safely explore the natural world or allow

teachers to provide an outdoor, interactive educational experience. Given certain improvements to the school grounds – such as upgraded fencing, an outdoor classroom, a meandering track, a community garden, or a native plant area – these educators felt they could facilitate a greater connection between Winona’s students and the outdoors.

Project Outdoors Loveland

100% Proposed Budget

Project Name	PLACES, PROGRAMS, PATHWAYS, OR CAPACITY	Implementation Year	GOCO Funds	Partner Cash Match	Partner In-Kind Match	Total Funding (\$)
Willow Bend Natural Area Improvements	PLACES	2018-2019	\$587,634.75	\$1,800,134.75	\$40,772.64	\$2,428,542.14
Winona School Improvements	PLACES	2018	\$96,870.00	\$15,000.00	\$8,505.00	\$120,375.00
Old St Louis Neighborhood Access Trail	PLACES	2018-2019	\$267,975.00	191,000.00	\$60,751.02	\$519,726.02
Bike Skills Features	PLACES	2018-2019	\$11,080.00	\$1,000.00	\$3,894.00	\$15,974.00
The Grove Outdoor Adventure Area	PLACES	2018-2019	\$137,225.00	\$137,225.00	\$0.00	\$274,450.00
East Big Thompson River Trail	PLACES	2019	\$467,490.00	\$744,490.00	\$41,165.00	\$1,253,145.00
Bike Flow Trails	PLACES	2018-2019	\$55,472.00	\$2,000.00	\$8,956.20	\$66,428.20
Pre-K, Elem. & Middle School Programming	PROGRAMS	2018-2020	\$89,602.00	\$15,366.67	\$72,202.00	\$177,170.67
Outdoor Education Teacher Training	PROGRAMS	2018-2020	\$12,446.00	\$250.00	\$3,000.00	\$15,696.00
Summer/After-school Programming	PROGRAMS	2018-2020	\$97,540.00	\$16,596.67	\$25,200.00	\$139,336.67
Family Outdoors Programming	PROGRAMS	2018-2020	\$79,110.00	\$17,646.67	\$111,675.76	\$208,432.43
Pathways Youth Corps - AgriCorps	PATHWAYS	2018-2020	\$66,018.00	\$0.00	\$66,018.00	\$132,036.00
Pathways Youth Corps - EduCorps	PATHWAYS	2018-2020	\$170,242.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$170,242.00
Internships & Career Exploration Pathways	PATHWAYS	2018-2020	\$42,143.25	\$2,000.00	\$35,565.60	\$79,708.85
Program Coordination, Outreach & Evaluation	CAPACITY	2018-2020	\$198,290.76	\$30,000.00	\$51,700.00	\$279,990.76
			\$2,379,138.76	\$2,972,709.75	\$529,405.22	\$5,881,253.73

CALCULATION OF MATCH REQUIREMENTS

Item	Explanation	Requirement
Minimum Match	25%/Total Costs	\$1,470,313.43
Minimum Cash Match	10%/Total Costs	\$588,125.37

SUMMARY OF IMPACT	
Number of kids served:	15,086
Age range of kids served:	2-18+
Grant request for PLACES:	\$1,623,746.75
Percent of grant to be spent on PLACES:	68.2%
Grant request for PROGRAMS:	\$278,698.00
Percent of grant to be spent on PROGRAMS:	11.7%
Grant request for PATHWAYS:	\$278,403.25
Percent of grant to be spent on PATHWAYS:	11.7%
Grant request for CAPACITY:	\$198,290.76
Percent of grant to be spent on CAPACITY:	8.3%
Number of youth jobs to be created:	48
Number of community jobs to be created:	3