

Dear ORCA kick-off meeting participants:

Thank you for attending the Ouray Recreation and Conservation Alliance (ORCA) kick-off meeting on September 21st. It was fantastic to see so many interested community leaders come together at Ridgway State Park to discuss our regional recreation and conservation needs. We are following up via email to share key takeaways and a **save the date** for the next ORCA meeting.

SAVE THE DATE: Next ORCA meeting

- We will reconvene on Thursday, December 2nd from 2:30-4:30 PM.
- Location: TBD. Our questionnaire during the first meeting indicated that participants prefer to meet in person if possible. The Convening & Organizing Committee is working on an outdoor location that's appropriate for a December meeting.

September Meeting takeaways

- Participants were excited about the ground-up, grassroots ORCA kick-off, and in general felt like the time is right to unify around shared recreation and conservation values. We heard that "true collaboration" with diverse representation is something many participants are excited to start. The framework and momentum developing around ORCA is encouraging. The way land managers have united, and having Ouray County leading the initial steps, bodes well for future success.
- Many participants discussed the implications of increased visitation – recreational and community infrastructure wasn't designed for the levels of use the region is experiencing.
- Collaboration is an important tool to minimize conflicts. There are several actions that could be viewed as early wins to help build support for ORCA, including an inventory of recreation uses and development of short, mid, and long-term goals, development of a designed camping plan, uniting around trail planning, and more.
- Participants discussed how collaborative development of leadership and decision-making structures will be important next steps to formalize ORCA and keep constituencies engaged.
- Participation: The group discussed key interests who weren't necessary present during the kick-off, including transportation, utilities (gas, electric), Native American tribes, black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) representation, farmers, ranchers (with the Ouray County Ranch History Museum suggested), equestrians, outfitters, trail riders, and the timber industry. *Representatives from many of these interests were invited, so the Convening & Organizing Committee is working to help garner their interest to participate in future meetings.*
- [Please click here to view the flipchart notes from each small group discussion.](#)

Coalition participation

- We are casting a wide net and are being as inclusive as possible as we extend our invitations. **Please see the attached summary of invited ORCA participants.**

- Please share this email with groups or individuals who you feel we may be overlooking!

Summary of Colorado Outdoor Regional Partnership grant

- In June 2021, Ouray County was awarded a \$60,000 reimbursable grant from Colorado Parks and Wildlife through the Colorado Outdoor Regional Partnership Initiative. Grant funds may be used for administration and capacity building over the next two years. Ouray County's contract with Colorado Parks and Wildlife was finalized in September 2021. The funding is meant to support capacity building for ORCA, a new "regional collaborative" as it works to align with the Colorado Outdoor Partnership's state-level vision. [Click here to learn more about the Colorado Outdoor Principles that are underpinning the Outdoor Regional Partnership Initiative.](#) In addition to the \$60,000 in CPW funding, Ouray County and the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forest each committed \$5,000 in cash match to leverage the grant, and the National Forest Foundation committed \$2,500 as an in-kind match.

If you have questions or wish to update your contact information, please email orca@ourayco.gov.

Thank you for your continued engagement as we move forward together.

With gratitude,

Commissioner Lynn Padgett on behalf of the Ouray Recreation & Conservation Alliance
Convening & Organizing Committee

Ouray County, City of Ouray, Town of Ridgway, Gunnison County, Hinsdale County, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Ridgway State Park, the Ouray Ranger District of the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forests, the Bureau of Land Management, the Uncompahgre Field Office, and the Uncompahgre Watershed Partnership, and the National Forest Foundation