

# The economic benefits of Great Outdoors Colorado and the Conservation Trust Fund

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In Colorado, profits from the sale of lottery products are distributed to Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO), the Conservation Trust Fund (CTF), and Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW). Coloradans have long known that their investment in these programs is a valuable component of healthy communities, but this value has never before been quantified. A new report by The Trust for Public Land demonstrates the extensive and varied economic gains provided by these investments.

For the full report, visit [tpl.org/goco-ctf-economic-benefits](http://tpl.org/goco-ctf-economic-benefits)

GOCO and CTF generate substantial economic benefits by using proceeds from the Colorado Lottery to protect and enhance the state's parks, trails, rivers, open spaces, recreation amenities, and wildlife. These investments generate jobs and promote economic activity, propel economic development, attract tourism, support farming and ranching, transform school yards, shape future leaders, provide recreation, and leverage non-state sources of funding.

## Generating jobs and promoting economic activity

The Trust for Public Land analyzed Colorado's investment through GOCO and CTF in the last ten years and found that these programs supported 11,800 jobs and \$507 million in labor income. That is, every \$1 million invested by GOCO and CTF supported 17.2 jobs.

## Propelling economic development

Parks, trails, rivers, open spaces, recreation amenities, and wildlife contribute to Colorado's high quality of life, which plays an important role in attracting business and employees. In addition, by providing opportunities for recreation, investments through GOCO and CTF help generate \$392 million in resident spending on sporting goods annually and support 1,510 Colorado businesses with 14,800 employees that produce \$4.30 billion in sales.

## Attracting tourism

Many people visit Colorado because of its scenic beauty and ample outdoor recreation opportunities supported by GOCO and CTF. The visitors who come to the state primarily to visit the outdoors spend \$1.21 billion annually and generate \$44.9 million and \$66.4 million in state and local tax revenues, respectively.

## Supporting farming and ranching

GOCO supports the state's agriculture and ranching industries by keeping working lands open and active. The state's 33,800 operating farms generate \$8.58 billion in agricultural production and support thousands of jobs.

## Transforming school yards

Access to playgrounds, facilitated by GOCO's School Yard Initiative, can improve health and reduce health care costs for Colorado families. The program has transformed 44 school yards that serve 18,000 children and maximized the impact of funding dollars by targeting high-need communities and leveraging additional funding sources for playground renovations.

## Shaping future leaders

In 2011, GOCO began a partnership with Colorado Youth Corps Association. This partnership helps Colorado communities realize substantial savings through subsidized costs for outdoor projects such as trail construction, while providing job training and education opportunities to youth corps members. A few examples of this partnership's diverse outcomes include \$343,000 in trail work completed by youth volunteers and \$1.59 million in AmeriCorps scholarships awarded since 2011.

## Providing recreation

Residents of Colorado enjoy the state's outdoor amenities. In fact, 90 percent of Coloradans participate in outdoor recreation activities in Colorado each year. The top five outdoor activities are walking, hiking or backpacking, picnicking, fishing, and tent camping. Each year residents receive a benefit of at least \$399 million for the recreational use of these amenities.

## Leveraging federal, local, private, and nonprofit funds

GOCO and CTF funds leverage matching funds from federal and local governments, as well as private sources such as land trusts and foundations. GOCO has leveraged at least \$1.45 billion in additional contributions, or at least \$2.31 for every dollar invested. CTF has leveraged at least \$1.49 billion in other funding since 2004, or at least \$2.43 for every dollar invested.

Source: The Trust for Public Land, The economic benefits of Great Outdoors Colorado and the Conservation Trust Fund. San Francisco, CA: The Trust for Public Land, 2018.

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The Trust for Public Land creates parks and protects land for people, ensuring healthy, livable communities for generations to come.

[tpl.org](http://tpl.org)

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