Grand Valley River Corridor Initiative

Fostering Collaboration across the Colorado and Gunnison River Corridors
Who We Are - RCI Core Team

- RiversEdge West
- Colorado Mesa University Water Center
- One Riverfront Commission

(Colorado West Land Trust was a founding member and is now a stakeholder)
The River Corridor
The Vision

1. **Engage** river corridor stakeholder groups to identify common values and challenges
2. Provide a platform and resource for river corridor stakeholders, fostering **coordinated collaboration** on future river-centric endeavors, leading to informed decision making
3. Develop **strategies to address shared goals**, objectives, and challenges
4. Foster **community education and connection** with the river
The Challenge

- Three municipalities + one county
- Dozens of agencies and local groups and industries
- Siloed decision-making
- Lack of a shared vision for the future of the river corridor
- ESA listed species
- Shrinking summer and fall flows
- Increased wildfire risks
RCI Phase I: Stakeholder Engagement

- One year of planning and stakeholder outreach
  - 20+ stakeholder interviews
  - Federal to Local Gov’t, Water Users, Growers, Private, Economic, Recreation, Environment, Education
  - Identifying Shared Values and Challenges + Vision for River Corridor
Support for the RCI

● Local Buy-In
  ○ Local government support (Palisade to Fruita)
  ○ RCI added to City of GJ and City of Fruita planning documents
  ○ Invitation to help guide Mesa County Comprehensive Plan
  ○ Overall stakeholder support for enhanced collaboration and coordination across river corridor

● Invested Time and Funding
  ○ $10,000 seed funding from One Riverfront Foundation (2020)
  ○ 250+ hours of in-kind contribution from Core Team
Shared Stakeholder Priorities from Community Interviews

*Common themes distilled from initial stakeholder input:*

- Fostering the River Corridor as a Public Amenity
  - Locus for economic development
  - Quality of life and health for community
  - Work and play
  - Access
Shared Stakeholder Priorities from Community Interviews

Common themes distilled from initial stakeholder input:

- Restoring and Maintaining Natural Resources
  - Changing flow regime
  - Drought Resiliency
  - ESA habitat
  - Increased fire risk
Shared Stakeholder Priorities from Community Interviews

Common themes distilled from initial stakeholder input:

• River Smart and Compatible Development
  ○ Need for Master Planning
  ○ Managing growth in corridor
  ○ Revisit land use and development codes
  ○ Accommodate development, recreation, access, and environment
  ○ Coordination across municipalities
Shared Stakeholder Priorities from Community Interviews

*Common themes distilled from initial stakeholder input:*

- Community Engagement and Awareness Building
  - Inclusive outreach and educational programming targeting all GV communities
  - Diverse voices in river corridor management
  - Landowner engagement
  - Education about key river corridor issues and best practices
Stakeholder Interview Summary

- Fostering the river corridor as a **public amenity** through inclusive community engagement activities, economic development, recreation enhancement, environmental education, and public service.
- Restoring and maintaining river corridor **natural resources** including floodplain and riparian habitat restoration and in-channel habitat for ESA-listed species.
- Encouraging **river smart and compatible development** through incorporation of special planning zones within the river corridor and outreach and education of planning agencies.
- Support the **drought resilience** of all the values the river brings to the community.
RCI Phase II

- **RCI Capacity Funding Secured:**
  - Xcel Foundation: $5,000
  - Colorado Watershed Assembly, Healthy Rivers Fund grant approved: $15,015

- **Funding Pending:**
  - Network for Landscape Conservation, Catalyst Fund: $21,112
RCI Phase II Scope of Work

1. Data Review and Gap Analysis
   Synthesize interview information, identify information gaps, review relevant planning documents.

1. Stakeholder Outreach
   Host 3-4 workshops to discuss vision and structure of RCI; participate in Mesa County Comprehensive Plan process.

1. RCI Governance and Coordination
   Develop a governance structure and decision making framework for RCI

1. Pursuit of Long-term Funding
   Identify and pursue funding opportunities that can help to sustain coordination capacity and project implementation.
Stakeholder Workshops

Four workshops to be scheduled this fall (September - October 2021)

1. Government Leaders and Staff
2. People and Community
3. Public Interest / Resource User Groups
4. Makeup Workshop
What we need to from you... follow up survey

- Affirm your support for this initiative
- Identify who from your agency/organization will participate in the RCI
- Participate in upcoming Fall workshops
- Identify river corridor planning documents that should be included in review
- Identify key stakeholders to participate in RCI Steering Committee moving forward
- Identify possible funding mechanisms and sources

We will send a survey out following this meeting to get your feedback about these questions.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME !!!
Let’s Talk! (what questions do you have?)