



# 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



The Daily Sentinel

# 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

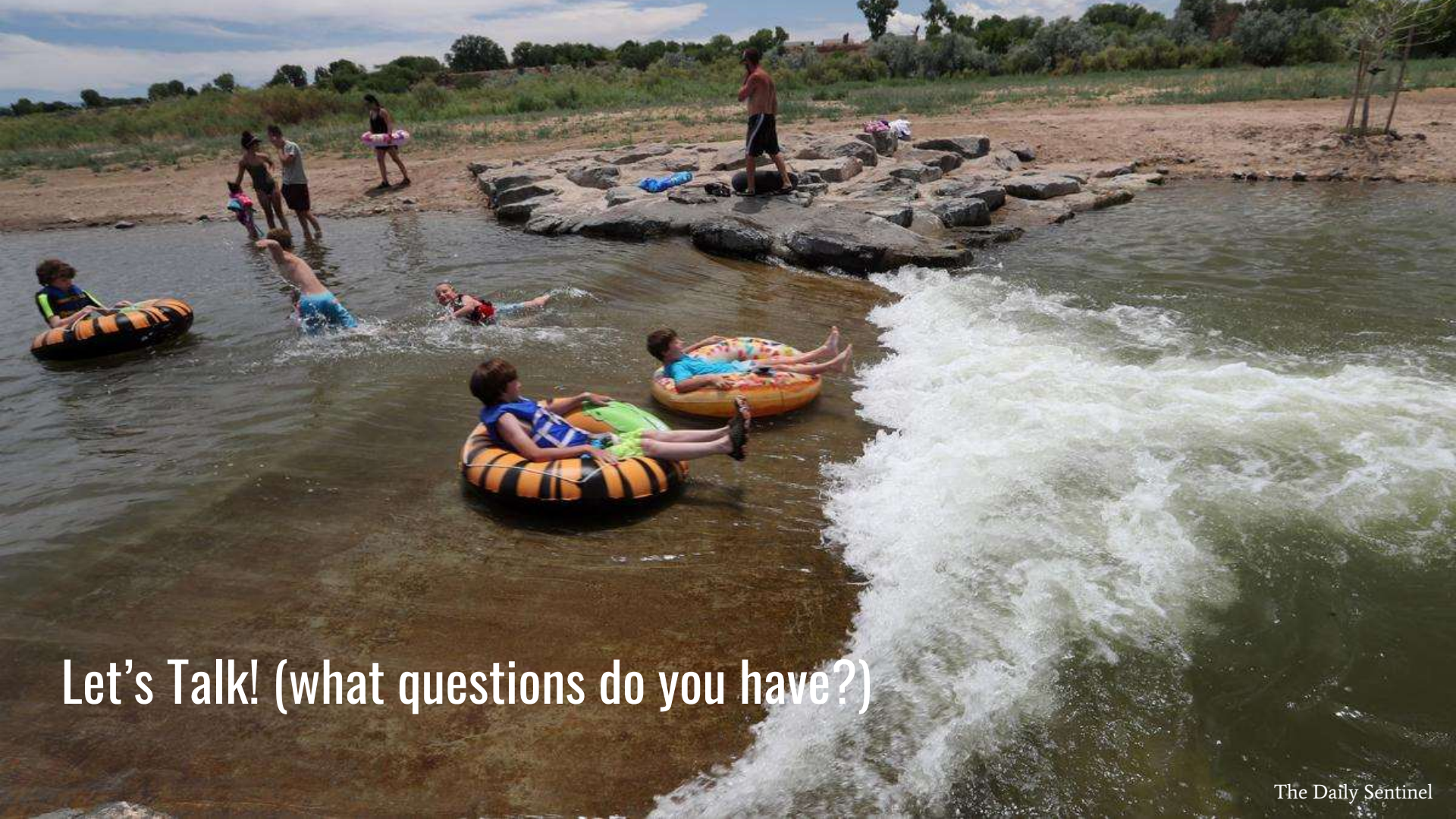
- Affirm your support for this initiative
- Identify who from your agency/organization will participate in the RCI
- Participate in upcoming Fall workshops
- Identify river corridor planning documents that should be included in review
- Identify key stakeholders to participate in RCI Steering Committee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