

COLORADO RIVER CORRIDOR INITIATIVE



The River Corridor Initiative is currently an informal group of concerned organizations and entities seeking input on how to improve communication and coordination regarding long-term management strategies for the Colorado and Gunnison Rivers and adjacent lands in the Grand Valley. We are seeking your input on river-related issues and concerns that matter most to you. This initiative is in the very early stages and our goal is to use your input to help us better understand what the issues are and who should be involved moving forward.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

The Grand Valley's Colorado River Corridor extends from De Beque to the Utah state line; it also encompasses the Gunnison River from Bridgeport to the confluence with the Colorado River. The river corridor is the lifeblood of our community, representing a vital economic, cultural and ecological resource that supports the Grand Valley's wellbeing and prosperity.

Agriculture, tourism, recreation, and commercial and residential development, strategic to the backbone of Mesa County's economy, depend upon the overall health and unique characteristics of the Colorado and Gunnison Rivers that form our western landscape.

As economic growth and expansion places more value on the resources provided by the Colorado and Gunnison Rivers, we must also ensure that the river corridor is managed to support its diverse values. A River Corridor Initiative would foster discussions among stakeholders to identify shared values and challenges. These discussions would identify strategies and actions supporting smart, river-compatible activities so that, in the years to come, we can maintain the quality of these benefits and enhance the economic resilience, health, safety of our community and its natural landscapes.

THE CHALLENGE

Three municipalities, Mesa County, and a wide array of federal, state, local, and private entities utilize and operate within the Colorado River Corridor. The growing number of diverse activities within this river corridor may not always coordinate with each other, potentially diminishing the quality of the corridor's natural resources so important to economic and recreational growth.

Without identifying how this array of entities value and manage the resources of the Colorado River Corridor, the Grand Valley risks experiencing irreplaceable damage through placing structures and infrastructure in harm's way, diminishing wildlife habitat, increased frequency and severity of wildfires, limiting community access to the corridor, and impacting water quality, critically altering the quality and resilience of this important resource.

THE VISION

Directed by stakeholders, the Colorado River Corridor Initiative will identify common goals and challenges, opportunities for coordination, and actions to address these.

Potential outcomes include highlighting the importance of this strategic riparian corridor as an asset critical to the region's economy and quality of life. It may inform development priorities and assist in protecting river corridor values over the long term. It may provide a comprehensive guide for managing hazards and a vision for recreation, conservation and restoration.

Finally, it may foster community education of and connection to the river corridor. The River Corridor Initiative will be developed with stakeholder and community engagement, grant funding and a project manager, and technical and planning consultants.

The Colorado River Corridor Initiative will:

THE INITIATIVE

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