CCA MISSION: Colorado Canyons Association fosters community stewardship, education and awareness of our National Conservation Lands with a focus on Dominguez-Escalante, Gunnison Gorge and McInnis Canyons National Conservation Areas (NCA’s) in western Colorado.

CCA brings a professional staff, board of directors and volunteer capacity to engage our communities and the Bureau of Land Management in stewarding these special public lands. Working with partners from across the country our work includes youth education, restoration, citizen science, interpretation and other activities in the regional National Conservation Lands with a focus on the three NCA’s.

NCA’s are lands designated by Congress to conserve, protect, enhance and manage public lands that feature exceptional scientific, cultural, ecological, historical, and recreational values, for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations. Our three NCA’s are part of America’s newest collection of protected public lands known as the National Conservation Lands. Of the 16 National Conservation Areas in this system, three are in western Colorado within an hour’s drive of one another!
CCA VISION: CCA builds strong support for our three National Conservation Areas and the system of BLM’s National Conservation Lands across the west. We work to ensure these designated public lands are well managed for all their intrinsic values with active support from community leaders, management agencies and the public. Our focus includes:

- Promote meaningful and healthy connections between our communities and their public lands through science-based education programs, volunteer activities and recreation activities promoting healthy lifestyles
- Maintain strong organizational capacity to effectively carry out programs while remaining fiscally sound on a permanent basis
- Ensure the ecological health and proper management of the National Conservation Areas in western Colorado

2019—2021 CCA GOALS

- Education - Restoration - Science
- Interpretive Activities - Conservation Lands Leadership
- Organizational Health - Capacity - Planning
Goal 1: Provide robust and meaningful education, restoration, and citizen science based programing. Maximize the effectiveness of CCA’s activities by offering the best possible events and programs, developing partnerships, and increasing use of NCAs as an educational resource for science and education.

**Strategy**

- Increase capacity, quality and participation in land and river based education programs
- Increase capacity, quality and participation in restoration and citizen science programs
- Increase effectiveness of Education Committee and develop formalized curriculum for all education programs
- Formalize our vision and curriculum for Catalpa
- Effectively utilize and increase our volunteer and intern programs
- Formalize our work with a more robust set of program partners in the region
- Offer programs to better engage underserved and Spanish speaking communities with the NCA’s

**Objective**

- Provide outdoor classroom field experiences for 4,000+ regional students annually; adhering to state education standards at grade level
- Engage 300 community members annually through outings/lectures
- Hire two seasonal river guide staff managed by the River Program Director and one paid intern for the land/curriculum program to be managed by the Education Director
- Host quarterly Education Committee meetings with 12 members and complete a curriculum book for all CCA student education programs
- Formalize our partnership with all three primary school districts in Mesa, Delta and Montrose Counties
- Create a formal two year vision and planning document for Catalpa including formalized curriculum, outcomes, targets and budget
- Formalize our restoration, data collection and monitoring protocol on land and river with assistance from BLM; develop a training and reporting system for citizen science programs
- Build on our emerging $100,000/year restoration focus along the Colorado and Gunnison rivers working with BLM, CWCB and WCCC
- Engage at least 200 annual volunteers contributing 3,000 hours of service; develop a formal volunteer training and communication plan
- Create and implement more effective program participant surveys and build on our partnership base to offer enrichment and capacity to CCA programs
- Offer our curriculum in Spanish, strive to have Spanish speakers on staff, and in the field, working more directly with families and teachers to overcome boundaries to participation
Goal 2: Maintain a strong and growing commitment to our interpretive activities and continue to be a leader with BLM and the Friends Grassroots Network providing a strong voice for the National Conservation Lands. Provide visitors and families to our local public lands with the information they need to enjoy the psychological and healthy lifestyle benefits of spending time outdoors.

STRATEGY

- Increase the effectiveness of our online tools and social media
- Update our brand, website and printed materials
- Expand our fee-for-service interpretive trips on land and river with an emphasis on specific organizational partners
- Extend the scope of our bookstore and expand to additional locations
- Grow our tear-off map programs and other interpretive materials for the public
- Work with BLM to create additional information and branding for the NCA’s on regional trails and roads
- Maintain our role as a leader with Conservation Lands Foundation and Friends Grassroots Network
- Build our influence and ability to advocate on issues important to the NCA’s and the National Conservation Lands
- Have message and brand that is consistent across all interpretive materials

OBJECTIVE

- Revamp the website and create an updated and user friendly page with information for participants, educators and others with expanded usability
- Update our logo and ‘look and feel’ of our work; recruit volunteers and a paid intern to assist with design of materials
- Develop an annual work plan with budget for our fee-for-service program and enhance our advertising for these trips
- Create a business plan and detailed annual operating budget; grow our bookstore at the GJFO and expand to Dinosaur Journey as well as other additional locations; make some of our products available for online purchase and update our point of sale system and implement bookstore staff training
- Tear-off maps are stocked regularly at strategic locations in all three NCA’s
- Display a logo and other information at most heavily used kiosks in the three NCA’s as well as other NCA/CCA related signage in and around the NCA’s
- Provide strong leadership on the Friends Grassroots Network engaging multiple staff and utilizing the training modules effectively to help CCA; work with CLF to continue our support and prioritize our grant deliverables
- Strong effective bi-partisan advocacy for the National Conservation Lands with a focus on LWCF, Conservation Lands funding, staffing, maintenance and other issues as approved by the Executive Committee
Goal 3: Grow our overall organizational health and capacity while working to formalize our planning processes. Improve existing financial support through a diverse mix of revenue sources emphasizing individuals and local business. Ensure a strong board while continuing to improve operational infrastructure.

STRATEGY

- Increase major donor & business donor support and create a board designated 4-6 month operating reserve
- Increase paying members and improve membership culture
- Increase total funds from non-grant & increase new grantor diversity
- Increase the number of contacts on social media/distribution lists and establish planned giving program
- Ensure the organization has well-qualified and committed people (staff, board, and volunteers) who have the expertise needed to meet its goals as well as succession plans for leadership
- Develop a stronger bookkeeping system for tracking programs, along with the financial and personnel resources
- Build the capacity and contribution from the board of directors and ensure active and effective committees
- Annual review of outreach, development, budget, board calendar and clarify executive director/staff/board roles/responsibilities
- Develop the board and staff capacity through structured professional and skills trainings

OBJECTIVE

- Annually: 50 business donors, 75 major donors, 600 paid members, $150,000 cash reserve
- Two annual major donor events including Crazy About Canyons and 2-3 membership events
- 45% total funds non-grant & non-governmental and 15-20% of grant funding every year are new foundations and have greater success with collaborative funding
- Launch planned giving program
- 4,000 email contacts & 5,000 FB likes
- Add one paid development/membership intern to be managed by the Development Coordinator and ensure a strong robust Development Committee
- Increase the bookkeeping and finance manager hours and responsibilities to include grant tracking and other tasks as well as some additional HR duties
- Develop a formal staff and board orientation program
- Develop written succession plans for Board leadership and executive director; review policies once a year and complete our first audit
- Invest in the staff and boards ongoing professional growth and development through contracting with outside professionals more formally; constantly reach outside the organization to form strategic partnerships that benefit the mission
- Invest in better communication technology for meetings
- Change board recruitment to board development Committee
DECISION CRITERIA

When evaluating current or future programs, CCA utilizes the following decision making criteria to remain responsive to the 2019-2021 Strategic Plan

- Does it directly benefit the three National Conservation Areas?
- Is it connecting the community more significantly to their public lands?
- Will this project fit within the parameters of our mission and vision?
- Does this project fit within our current area of expertise?
- Does the organization already have, or can it attract, the resources needed to take this project on?
- Does the project strengthen our partnerships?
- Is there broad and politically diverse support for our advocacy positions?
- Does the anticipated outcome justify the resources needed to implement the project?

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

This planning document will serve as a primary reference for our success

- Colorado Canyons Association utilizes annual planning and organizational tracking documents to ensure we are within the goals of this Strategic Plan
- The board of directors will oversee an annual in-depth analysis and review of our accomplishments based on this plan and reference the outcomes of the plan at every meeting throughout the year
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