



Generation Wild of the Pikes Peak Region

Strategic Transition Plan 2021

History

- Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) created the Generation Wild movement to connect kids and families to outdoor activities. In response to GOCO's call, the Generation Wild of the Pikes Peak Region (GWPPR) coalition was formed to encourage kids and families in Southeast Colorado Springs, and beyond, to spend time together outside — improving overall health, and fostering a love, appreciation and familiarity with nature and the natural beauty in the Pikes Peak Region.
- GWPPR is currently housed within Catamount Institute. Catamount Institute has been providing outdoor science learning and adventures for youth in the Pikes Peak region for over 20 years. The mission of Catamount Institute is to connect kids to the outdoors.

Moving Forward

- The growth and findings of GWPPR prompted the need to re-evaluate and strategically plan for the coalition's continued operations and expansion.
- Accordingly, GWPPR undertook a strategic planning process in early 2020.

Planning Process

Steps Taken to Inform this Plan

- From January to March 2020, Generation Wild of the Pikes Peak Region engaged in a strategic planning process to aid in:
 - defining structure and programming directives
 - establishing common goals
 - developing a fundraising framework for sustainability
 - confirming commitment of coalition members
 - identifying new potential partners
 - reviewing objectives to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of the community.
- The process included:
 - Coalition Assessment: in-person interviews with organizations involved in the existing GWPPR coalition.
 - Community Assessment: in-person and telephone interviews with community leaders and members in Southeast Colorado Springs, as well as with outdoor service providers not currently involved with Generation Wild of the Pikes Peak Region.
 - Strategic Planning Sessions: two facilitated group discussions with a mix of current coalition members, Southeast Colorado Springs community leaders and service providers, and other potential partners and interested parties like El Paso County Public Health and Trails and Open Space Coalition

- Additional strategic planning activities (Steering Committee Brainstorm & Interest Session and Strategic Plan Review Session) had to be postponed due to COVID-19 response.

Key Findings

- The structure of GWPPR needs to transition to a community-led model to ensure GWPPR is culturally relevant, responsive to community needs, and sustainable. Establishment of an interim community leadership team must precede further strategic planning activities. Additional community feedback is necessary to inform and develop a sustainable model led by members of the Southeast Colorado Springs community and responsive to community needs.
- While GWPPR needs to be led by members of the Southeast Colorado Springs community, one designated convener of the coalition is needed to serve as a single point of contact and hub of communication with the community and with coalition leadership, members, and providers.
- The convener of GWPPR does not have to be the same person or entity as the fiscal agent for the coalition or the organization that houses the capacity positions.
- Due to the need to transition to a community-led governance model, the budget for GWPPR should remain consistent for the next year or two.
- Collaborative events that bring multiple program providers together have been very successful at reaching the intended audience.

Transition Plan

Immediate Priorities

- Community-Led Structural Sustainability.
 - Interim Steering Committee. GWPPR is establishing an interim Steering Committee comprised of Southeast Colorado Springs community leaders, a youth voice, a parent voice, an educator voice, an outdoor service provider, and a representative from local government. This Steering Committee will lead the ongoing planning efforts for GWPPR, obtaining additional community feedback regarding sustainable long-term structure for the coalition, culturally relevant programming, and priorities/budget.
 - Interim Leader / Convener. A single point of contact and central communication hub is vital to the sustainability of GWPPR. Catamount Institute will build this capacity position into its budget and is committed to financially supporting it into the future.
 - Fiscal Agent(s). Depending on the type of grant being sought, either the City of Colorado Springs or Catamount Institute will serve as the fiscal agent.
 - Coalition. The community-led Interim Steering Committee will flesh out the terms and conditions of coalition membership. Findings from the strategic planning process favor open membership for any interested parties including community members, community organizations, parents, youth, educators, outdoor service providers, elected officials, and government entities.
 - Vision/Mission/Budget. This Interim Steering Committee will be responsible for establishing these crucial pieces of a 3- to 5-year strategic plan.
- Financial Sustainability.

- Maintain current level of funding. In this period of transition to a community-led structure, GWPPR plans to maintain the current level of funding (roughly \$250,000/year). Funding for programming will be sought from grants and sponsorships. Depending on the type of funding available, Catamount Institute or the City of Colorado Springs will serve as the fiscal agent for purposes of the grant.
- Allocation of grant-based funding. Grant funding obtained on behalf of the GWPPR coalition will be prioritized as follows:
 - **First priority** - Funding for new, culturally relevant programming designed specifically to meet the needs of Southeast Colorado Springs and/or programming by grass roots and minority operated organizations from Southeast Colorado Springs aligned with the GWPPR goals.
 - **Second priority** - Funding for collaborative events and activities bringing together several GWPPR outdoor service providers, Southeast Colorado Springs community organizations, educators, and more.
 - **Third priority** - Funding for programming from established outdoor service providers that participated in the first iteration of the GWPPR coalition. While many programs may look similar other programs will be moved into more collaborative opportunities with more successful existing programs (i.e. Catamount Outdoor Schools, City of Colorado Community Centers).
- Revenue Streams. Several suggestions for revenue streams were raised during the strategic planning process. The Interim Steering Committee will be tasked with exploring revenue stream suggestions and evaluating whether they are worth pursuing.

Goals

- Inclusive, Culturally Relevant Programming.
 - The Coalition Assessment revealed a learning curve on the part of outdoor service providers regarding culturally relevant programming for the Southeast Colorado Springs community. Many providers discovered their existing programming had to be adapted to best serve this community.
 - The Community Assessment revealed that the Southeast Colorado Springs community perception of “outdoors” and the ways the community prefers to experience outdoors is significantly different from the perceptions and preferences of some outdoor service providers.
 - More community feedback is needed to determine what programming, experiences, delivery methods, and instructors/facilitators/leaders will resonate with the Southeast Colorado Springs Community.
- Training: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion for Outdoor Providers & Outdoor Training for Community Organizations
 - One way to ensure more culturally relevant programming is to provide training for outdoor service providers and community organizations.
 - Outdoor service providers expressed a desire to participate in diversity, equity, and inclusion training to better serve Southeast Colorado Springs.

- Organizations in Southeast Colorado Springs expressed a desire to be trained on outdoor services and skills so they can lead/instruct outdoor experiences and activities with the groups they already serve.
- Guided/Recommended Progression of Outdoor Experiences and Skills
 - While the final product is uncertain at this time, a need was collectively identified for recommendations of where to start and how to progress through various outdoor experiences and skills.
 - Additional community feedback regarding desired outdoor experiences and skills will enable the Interim Steering Committee and/or coalition members to focus on culturally relevant roadmaps and skill acquisition ladders.
- Become a Movement Known by All Kids, Youth, and Families in Southeast Colorado Springs
 - The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the mental and physical health benefits of spending time outdoors. Unfortunately, beautiful outdoor spaces are not easily accessible for many residents of Southeast Colorado Springs. Comfort being outdoors is also low in this community.
 - GWPPR can become a movement for all residents of the Southeast, providing outdoor access, experiences, and skills, and partnering with and empowering residents to create outdoor spaces within the community.

Next Steps

- Convene Interim Steering Committee
 - Prior to the COVID-19 social distancing requests and mandates, invitations were sent to potential Interim Steering Committee members. The response was enthusiastic and encouraging.
 - Depending on the ongoing response to COVID-19, GWPPR will seek to convene this group to establish a process for moving forward with additional community feedback to inform a long-term sustainable structure and other goals outlined above.