



# Routt Recreation & Conservation Roundtable Charter

Ratified November 21, 2024

## Introduction

Locals and visitors alike are drawn to Routt County, Colorado for its natural surroundings and recreational opportunities. Recreation helps drive the economy and improve the lifestyle of those who live in and visit this mountain community. However, with demand for outdoor access and trails ever increasing, there is a need to coordinate thoughtful planning and decision-making regarding the myriad recreational development opportunities that are responding to the increase in demand. These opportunities should be explored in the interest of enhancing enjoyment, mitigating user conflicts, and reducing or eliminating long-term environmental impacts.

There are many exceptional agencies and programs that manage recreational opportunities in Routt County and work to protect the environment. These entities often undertake planning and policy making processes. These processes often need, and sometimes require, public input. The Routt Recreation and Conservation Roundtable (Roundtable) is developed and designed to be a diverse representative body that is poised to deliver non-binding input to these planning and policy making processes and entities.

This Charter outlines the purpose, scope and foundational principles of the Routt Recreation and Conservation Roundtable along with its ground rules, governance structure, and media protocols.

## Purpose

The Routt Recreation and Conservation Roundtable has two objectives:

- To provide non-binding insights and recommendations to land managers engaged in recreation and/or conservation planning processes and/or policy decisions in Routt County. The community

forum will represent stakeholders and agencies and work to develop a collaborative environment for information sharing, understanding, discussion, collaboration and input.

- Collaborate to promote strategic planning and implementation of activities.

## Scope

The Routt Recreation and Conservation Roundtable's primary scope is defined as follows:

- **Issues:** Outdoor recreation through a conservation lens.
- **Geography:** Routt County and adjacent lands that have a bearing on Routt County.
- **Stakeholders:** Recreation user groups; agriculture; economic development interests; wildlife, environmental, and conservation advocates; local, state and federal agencies.

## Foundational Principles

The Roundtable is founded upon the following principles for membership and collaborative engagement on issues related to recreation and conservation in Routt County.

Members of the Roundtable:

1. Recognize that recreation and the related economic development are important to Routt County locals and visitors, and that this needs to be balanced with conservation of our natural resources.
2. Recognize that those members representing user groups are responsible for acting as a communication conduit – ensuring insight is brought from possible diverse users within that group to best inform land managers.
3. Recognize that any new recreational opportunities need to mitigate user conflicts and reduce or eliminate long-term environmental impacts.
4. Commit to understanding factors related to potential human and environmental impacts with the intent to improve the current situation.
5. Commit to understanding each other's interests, respecting that interests can be divergent, and working toward solutions that value these various interests, including those related to environmental, social, and economic viability.
6. Commit to utilizing sound science and evidence in discussions.
7. Commit to an outcomes-based approach and promote implementation of shared solutions.
8. Recognize that full agreement on all issues is not necessary to pursue specific opportunities for collaboration on certain issues.
9. Recognize that there is value to land managers and decision-makers in hearing diverse perspectives, even when consensus cannot be reached.
10. Recognize the value of building upon, and collaborating with, existing efforts addressing recreation and conservation issues in Routt County.
11. Committee members are expected to be exemplary representatives of recreation on public lands and shall abide by all laws governing recreation on public lands.

## Ground Rules

The following ground rules encourage productive and collaborative deliberation. All Roundtable members will agree to follow them and give the Facilitator the authority to enforce them:

- **GOOD FAITH:** Act in good faith in all aspects of group deliberations with the intent to promote joint problem solving, collaboration, and collective, common-ground solutions.
- **OWNERSHIP:** Take ownership in the outcomes and the success of the process.
- **FOCUS:** Maintain focus on the process scope and meeting objectives; stick to the agenda item being discussed.
- **LISTENING and PHONES:** Listen to each speaker rather than preparing your response; no interruptions; refrain from use of smart phones and other technologies.
- **PARTICIPATION:** Participate actively, speak briefly, and agree succinctly.
- **RESPECT:** Disagree judiciously and without being disagreeable; do not engage in personal attacks; in all contexts, refrain from behavior that denigrates other participants or is disruptive to the work of the group.
- **PREPAREDNESS AND COMMITMENT:** Prepare for and attend each session and get up to speed if you miss a meeting.
- **REPRESENTATION AT THE DISCUSSION TABLE:** Participation in discussions is by invitation, with intent to include a variety of interests and perspectives. Roundtable discussions are open to public observation and may include written and/or verbal opportunities for the public to provide comment when deemed necessary or appropriate.
- **REPORTING:** The Facilitator will prepare detailed summaries of each meeting. A final report will capture key interests, proposed solutions, consensus where applicable, and the range of perspectives where consensus does not exist. Summaries and reports will not attribute specific concepts or perspectives to individuals or organizations unless those individuals/organizations presented as a formal item on the agenda.
- **DISCRETION:** To enable collaborative problem-solving, use discretion when externally characterizing or commenting on discussions or issues.
- **FACILITATION AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION:** Let the Facilitator facilitate; allow them to enforce the ground rules and engage them with any concerns.

## Structure and Governance

There are three levels of structure within the Routt Recreation and Conservation Roundtable. The Roundtable is the primary body and is made up of representatives from user groups and other interests. The Executive Committee is the primary administrator and decision-making body of the Routt Recreation and Conservation Roundtable, and is made up of the land management agencies that enact plans and policies related to recreation and conservation in Routt County. Discussion Groups can also be created to address specific issues that need more in-depth discussions and are convened with a higher frequency of meetings for a defined time period.

### ➤ **Roundtable**

**Overview:** The Roundtable includes organizations and individuals interested in working collaboratively to advance the purpose of the Roundtable. Members will discuss, deliberate and to the extent possible, work to provide perspective regarding specific recreation and conservation issues. These will be provided to the planning or policy-making body responsible for the given issue. The Roundtable as a whole will abide by the foundational principles, ground rules and media protocols found in this Charter.

**Roles and responsibilities; decision-making:** Decision-making roles of Roundtable members include the development of non-binding advice and recommendations regarding recreation and conservation issues in Routt County. While the Roundtable has not been developed as a voting body (with the exception of signing-on to letters of support), all feedback will be sought and considered resulting in general agreement regarding the activities that the Roundtable can plan and implement that have the potential to make positive on-the-ground impacts. Issues to be discussed may be suggested to the Executive Committee for inclusion on the agenda of a future Roundtable meeting. Note that the Roundtable has been convened to provide perspectives to land management agencies regarding recreation and conservation planning and policy making processes and decisions. The Roundtable is not convened to hold conversations that do not have a direct line to a near-term action of some kind.

The process for submitting recommendations to the Executive Committee regarding agenda items to be taken up by the Roundtable is as follows:

1. Roundtable members will send the Executive Committee a memo that includes their name; topic; how this is a priority for the Roundtable; what the timeline is for this project; what land management agency or agencies are involved; what agency or agencies are the project lead; what the potential issues are; what the potential solutions are; and what needs to be discussed by the Roundtable.
2. The agency listed as the lead will determine whether this is an issue that has agency support to begin a process that involves some type of action.
  - a. If yes, the lead will forward on to the Executive Committee to determine when it can be included on a Roundtable agenda.
  - b. If no, the lead will inform the member that the Roundtable will not be taking up the issue.

**Letters of support:** The Roundtable may be approached by leaders seeking letters of support for recreation and/or conservation projects or policy initiatives. Should this occur, the Roundtable – *except Executive Committee members* – may issue letters of support if two-thirds of Roundtable members who choose to participate in the process reach consensus in support of the project/policy initiative. Any Roundtable member can recuse themselves from voting to support the project/policy initiative.

Roundtable members will evaluate the project or policy initiative based on whether it:

- Aligns with the purpose and guiding principles of the Roundtable (guiding principles are found in the RRCR's Plan for Conservation and Recreation).
- Is realistic (implementable, cost-effective, etc.).
- Is likely to be supported by the broader community.
- Will lead to positive action.

**Conditions of membership:** Roundtable members must comply with the conditions of membership set forth in this Charter. Roundtable members are required to complete and provide to the Executive Committee an application form for their first term. After each two-year period, public notice will be given and community members can apply to challenge an incumbent or fill a seat that has been vacated. There are no term limits imposed on RRCR membership. Members shall make every effort to attend all meetings and will provide the Facilitator with advanced written notice via email if consecutive meetings are to be missed.

**Adding new member seats or replacing members that resign their seats:** New member seats will be added if new user groups or unrepresented interests express a need to join the Roundtable. New seats will be added upon review and approval of the Executive Committee. New seats may be immediately filled via the application process. If a Roundtable member voluntarily resigns from their seat prior to the end of their term, the Executive Committee can choose to fill the seat with another appropriate representative or open an application process. New members must comply with the conditions of membership set forth in this Charter and must also agree to honor Roundtable agreements made prior to their membership; requests for membership must be submitted in writing.

**Meetings:** Roundtable meetings will be scheduled on a regular basis with guidance from the Executive Committee. Currently, the Roundtable meets every other month on the second Thursday from 3:00-5:30pm Mountain Time (December-February-April-June-August-October). Meetings have a hybrid format (virtual/in-person), with preference given to in-person attendance if possible.

**Representation:** The Roundtable will include one seat each for the 17 user groups and interests listed below, as well as five 'at-large' seats, for a total of 22 total seats. At-large seats are included for citizens that want to offer their general knowledge of the community and recreation and/or conservation issues, but don't necessarily represent any one specific user group or interest. *Ex officio* seats are included to provide data and information to the Roundtable but not partake in deliberations regarding recommendations.

The following recreational users and interest groups will be provided a seat on the Roundtable:

- Adaptive users [1]
- At-large seats [5]
- Economic & community development [1]
- Equestrian [1]
- Hunting & fishing [1]
- Land trust [1]
- Mountain biking [1]
- Natural resource & environmental advocacy [1]
- Quiet use & hiking [1]
- Ranching & farming [1]
- Recreational boating [1]
- Road and gravel biking [1]
- Special use permit holder [1]
- Summer motorized [1]
- Trail running [1]
- Wildlife conservation [1]
- Winter motorized [1]
- Winter non-motorized [1]
- Colorado Department of Transportation [1] \*
- Yampa Valley Community Foundation\* [1]
- Steamboat Chamber\* [1]
- Steamboat Ski & Resort Corp. [1] \*
- Executive Committee members [6]

*\*Denotes Ex officio members*

**Proxies and alternates:** There are no proxies or alternates for Roundtable members.

### ➤ **Discussion Groups**

If an issue is brought to the Roundtable requires additional time and in-depth conversation, a "Discussion" process can be called by the Executive Committee. Discussion Groups meet outside of regularly scheduled meetings for an agreed upon number of meetings to develop a recommendation on a defined issue. Roundtable members will be asked to volunteer to take part in these more in-depth discussions based on whether they feel their user group or interest is a key stakeholder in the Discussion. Discussions may bring in outside expertise and outside stakeholder participation. They are

meant to be limited in time and scope to a pressing issue with a clear ongoing decision-making process that is seeking a Roundtable recommendation.

### ➤ **Executive Committee**

**Overview:** The Executive Committee (Committee) is the primary decision-making body for agenda setting and administration of the Roundtable. It is a body of land managers that brings issues to the Roundtable for discussion. It executes the priorities and function of the Roundtable with the input of Roundtable members. The Executive Committee will collectively fund the Roundtable, seat and administer its activities, and make decisions regarding new seats and any potential violations of the foundational principles and ground rules found in this Charter. Executive Committee members are also *Ex officio* members of the Roundtable.

**Composition:** The Executive Committee shall include representatives from the following six entities:

- Bureau of Land Management
- City of Steamboat Springs
- Colorado Parks and Wildlife
- Colorado State Land Board
- Routt County
- U.S. Forest Service

**Roles and responsibilities:** The Executive Committee is the primary decision-making body for agenda setting and administration of the Roundtable; it approves its Charter, membership requirements, and funding model; sets agendas and action plans; establishes Discussion Groups; and, where applicable, reviews Discussion Group recommendations to ensure they are within the scope of the issue at hand.

The Committee shall work with the Facilitator to identify and address emerging issues and opportunities, review proposed agendas for Roundtable meetings, and review and determine appropriate action on new membership requests.

**Meetings:** Committee members are expected to attend all Executive Committee and Roundtable meetings and honor all aspects of this Charter. One designated alternate per agency will be included in all Executive Committee communications and expected to participate (if possible) in the event of the primary member being unable to attend a meeting. It is anticipated that the Executive Committee will meet 6 times per year to determine appropriate issues for Roundtable discussion. Other meetings of the Executive Committee may be called on an as needed basis.

**Decision-making:** The Executive Committee will make decisions on the recreation and conservation issues to be brought before the Roundtable, seating of Roundtable members, funding and administration of the Roundtable, and potential removal of Roundtable members for Charter infractions (see below). The Executive Committee will strive for consensus on all decisions. Consensus in this context is defined as an agreement that members can support or abide by and to which they do not formally object. In the absence of consensus, and unless otherwise specified, all decisions require the approval of a three-fourths majority of the Executive Committee. Absentee voting is permitted.

**Removal of Roundtable members:** Removal of Roundtable members may occur due to lack of participation or due to failure of the member to adhere to the foundational principles, ground rules,

media protocols, or other provisions contained in this Charter. The member in question may choose to remove themselves voluntarily from the Roundtable or may request a dispute resolution process. The dispute resolution process entails:

1. Notification in writing to the full Executive Committee of a potential infraction from a Roundtable member, the Facilitator, or an Executive Committee member.
2. Teleconference call of the Executive Committee to determine whether a violation may have occurred. If so, the following steps may be taken:
  - i. Notice via email to the Roundtable member.
  - ii. Teleconference call to work on mitigating damage and/or determining an appropriate path forward.
  - iii. After the call, an Executive Committee discussion will be held (and a vote as necessary requiring approval of three-fourths majority) determining:
    - a. No action warranted.
    - b. A warning issued.
    - c. Expulsion from the Roundtable.
  - iv. Findings issued to the member regarding the Executive Committee's decision.  
*Note: If a warning is issued, any additional infractions may result in immediate expulsion.*

If a seat is vacated, see above – ‘Adding new member seats or replacing members that resign their seats.’

**Quorum:** The presence of at least 50% of current Executive Committee members constitutes a quorum.

**Officers and Executive Committee:** The Executive Committee may choose to establish a Chair or Co-Chairs to streamline Roundtable planning and communications with the Facilitator. Such a decision must be made according to the decision-making processes outlined in this Charter. The Committee may also informally appoint *ad hoc* leadership on a given topic, meeting, or agenda, based on the recreation or conservation issue and jurisdiction at hand.

**Terms of Executive Committee members:** Executive Committee members shall be selected internally by their respective agencies and no term limits are in place. All agencies shall keep a representative appointed. If an Executive Committee member expects an extended absence, they shall request an alternate to represent the agency until their return.

### ➤ **Facilitator**

The Facilitator (or team of facilitators) is a third party responsible for facilitation, mediation, project management and management of funding as related to the activities of the Executive Committee, Discussion Groups, and Roundtable at large. The Facilitator is responsible for:

- Helping to design the process and ensuring that it runs smoothly.
- Maintaining contact lists and communications with participants.
- Developing agendas, facilitating meetings, producing meeting summaries and following up with members on action items.
- Promoting full participation of all Roundtable members, and – where possible – helping the parties resolve their differences and work toward consensus on issues.

- Is responsible for timely turnaround on required approval items.
- Being available to consult confidentially with participants during and between meetings.

The Facilitator serves at the pleasure of the Executive Committee and is subject to available funding to support its activities. The Facilitator will remain neutral regarding substantive discussions, outcomes, and recommendations of the Roundtable.

### **Media Protocols**

Media following protocols are provided to ensure that Roundtable members utilize approved messages and processes when communicating on behalf of the Roundtable and that individual member's interests are protected through the accurate characterization of their association with the Roundtable.

- Do not characterize or attribute the opinions or positions of other members of the Roundtable.
- Only use pre-approved messaging that has been agreed upon by the Roundtable when characterizing the Roundtable on behalf of its members, and when characterizing the roles and commitments of members.
- Be clear to delineate your own opinion or interest from the agreed-upon messaging of the Roundtable.
- Press releases from the Roundtable will be reviewed and agreed to by the Executive Committee prior to their release. The Facilitator will coordinate the development, review, and submission of media releases under a timely process. Releases will be submitted by the Facilitator or other designated communications specialist on behalf of the Roundtable.
- Individual members should not make announcements on behalf of the Roundtable. Members planning their own media releases and/or other formal communications that reference or characterize the Roundtable outside of pre-approved messaging – including but not limited to web copy and presentations – should submit the draft materials to the Facilitator for review at least one week prior to the intended public release date. The Facilitator will review the materials for consistency with agreed-upon messaging and, where necessary, coordinate with the Executive Committee for further review.
- If you receive a media inquiry to speak on behalf of the Roundtable, you are encouraged to coordinate with the Facilitator prior to providing answers to interview questions; you may also feel free to refer the inquiry directly to the Facilitator.

### **Amendments to Charter**

The Executive Committee will strive for consensus in all amendments to this Charter. Consensus is defined as an agreement that participants can support or abide by and to which they do not formally object. In the absence of consensus, amendments require approval by a three-fourths majority of the Executive Committee.