

What is Project Mountaintop?

Engaging people from diverse backgrounds who want to take leadership roles in the outdoors, and sharing their experiences.

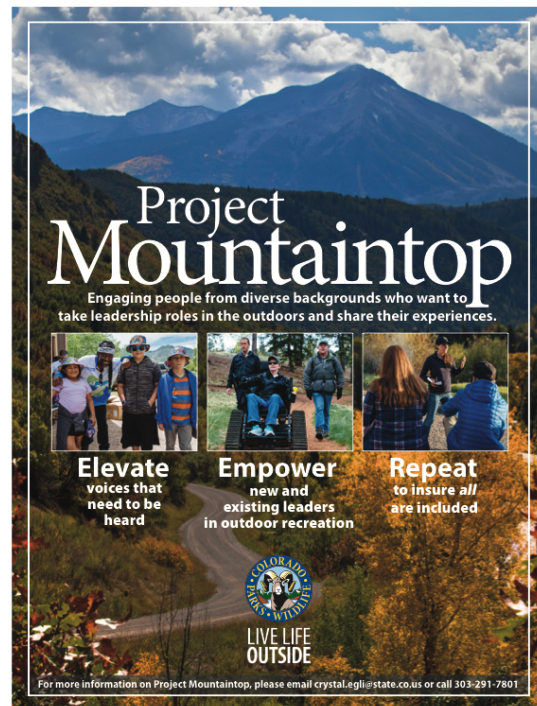
Project Mountaintop is an internal strategy for the Live Life Outside campaign that will identify, engage and empower historically marginalized Coloradans. This series will move beyond diversity to focus on authentic meaningful engagement and inclusivity. This series will also create an inclusive space where existing leaders from diverse backgrounds can be elevated and emerging leaders can be forged. Content created will be in the form of videos (primary), blog posts, tweets, instagram stories, facebook live events, etc.

Inclusivity + Equity = Diversity

Why Project Mountaintop?

Governor Polis has a theme for the state: “Colorado for All.” As he clarified in a speech earlier this year, “It really means Colorado for everybody, because we all live together.” Not only do we live together, but we also recreate together, and it’s time to show everybody who is out there. The Live Life Outside campaign is a great way to tie in our conservation theme with outdoor recreation and engage groups from all walks of life with what we really mean by *Live Life Outside*.

Additionally, “Recruiting a talented and diverse workforce” is part of Goal 4 of CPW’s strategic plan, and this starts with a foundation of letting everyone know the outdoors is and can be for them, and therefore so is Colorado Parks and Wildlife.



And finally, Coloradans deserve to be accurately reflected and celebrated in the demographics as they actually exist across our state. We need to ensure we are reflecting the image of Coloradans as a whole, with *intentional* inclusion.

HOW-TO STEPS: This series is anchored in three steps: Identify, Engage and Empower.

1. **IDENTIFY** and develop a database of existing or emerging leaders of outdoor recreation activities.

- We're specifically keeping an eye out for black and brown people, people with disabilities, people who identify as LGBTQIA+, veterans, plus-size individuals...anything that makes someone stand out from the typical archetypes the media portrays of an outdoor recreator/enthusiast.
 - We're looking for birdwatchers, hunters, hikers, anglers, wildflower experts, rock climbers, water skiers, mountain bikers; literally anything someone could be good at outside and could show another person how to do.
2. **ENGAGE** by asking if they would like to be filmed as part of a series highlighting outdoor recreation in Colorado for the Live Life Outside campaign.
- The video would consist of three parts:
 - a. **Beauty shots** of the subject doing their activity, like rock climbing.
 - b. **Interview** the subject. Ask about how they got into rock climbing, highlight specific rock climbing opportunities in Colorado, etc.
 - i. Subject has the CHOICE to discuss the thing that makes them stand out in their sport, i.e. what it's like to rock climb with a disability, or NOT. They can simply just BE a kick-butt rock climber and never mention what makes them stand out. The choice is in their hands.
 - c. Showing the subject in a **leadership** role, teaching either a large or small group of new people their activity.
 - i. We ask the subject if they have a group of people in mind they would like to teach (implied in the ask: others with disabilities?) or if we should open it to the public. The latter example would likely result in a disabled person teaching rock climbing to abled-bodied people. Both are extremely powerful and wonderful things to show.
3. **EMPOWER** selected leaders, either by giving them a platform to elevate their existing leadership roles or providing the support they need to turn into a leader.
- For the *new* leaders: We will work together with existing leaders to identify and overcome barriers to access and opportunities historically marginalized stakeholders have, to help transition them from a recreator into a leader.
 - This can come in the form of providing structure to help people sign up for their nature hike, helping create an agenda for a class or clinic, networking them with an existing leader and letting them take the reigns, providing support volunteers or staff to assist in their activity (no one can run a fishing clinic on their own!), etc.

- For the *existing* leaders, we can use CPW platforms to elevate their voices and status as a leader in their recreation. A video about them on CPW's social media pages gives street cred as well as a wider audience. CPW can also help forge partnerships between the subjects and other organizations in the broader statewide or national outdoor recreation space we have connections with.
- For both, this is an opportunity to share the importance of getting outdoors and gives them a platform to add their voice and become a more active participant in CPW's mission and goals.

The following outcomes will be apparent:

1. Showcasing a wide range of recreational opportunities Colorado has to offer.
2. We will reach SO MANY new audiences, and hopefully therefore inspire so many to join in the fun.
3. We will begin to reflect the demographics that actually exist here in Colorado.
4. We have a chance to highlight those working for us who are already doing this.
5. THE BEST ONE: We will be helping to create an entire *fleet* of new outdoor leaders from all walks of life.
6. CPW now has more go-to people to draw from when calling upon folks for photo shoots, media opportunities, videos, clinics and classes, etc.

This is an ongoing video series with no end. We need to *establish recreation subject priorities* as well as *reasonable measurable goals* per year.

Scope

Having a defined structure to this and internally branding it as “Project Mountaintop” also gives us a way for us to communicate our strategy to other agencies that may be interested in repeating our process.

Potential partners include: GOCO, History Colorado, Black American West Museum, Next 100 Coalition, NorthFace, REI, Patagonia

We're almost there!

We are so close to *almost* doing this in many of our videos. For example, we have made several videos with female hunters talking about what it's like to be a woman in a male-dominated activity. The only component we'd need to add to that is showing them taking it into a leadership role and teaching two or more people how to pack out, or taking them to a shooting range, etc. There are other examples where if we'd looked harder for someone not typically represented we would have accomplished this as well. With just a little more intent and a little more focus on passing the knowledge on, we can easily fulfill the mission of Project Mountaintop.