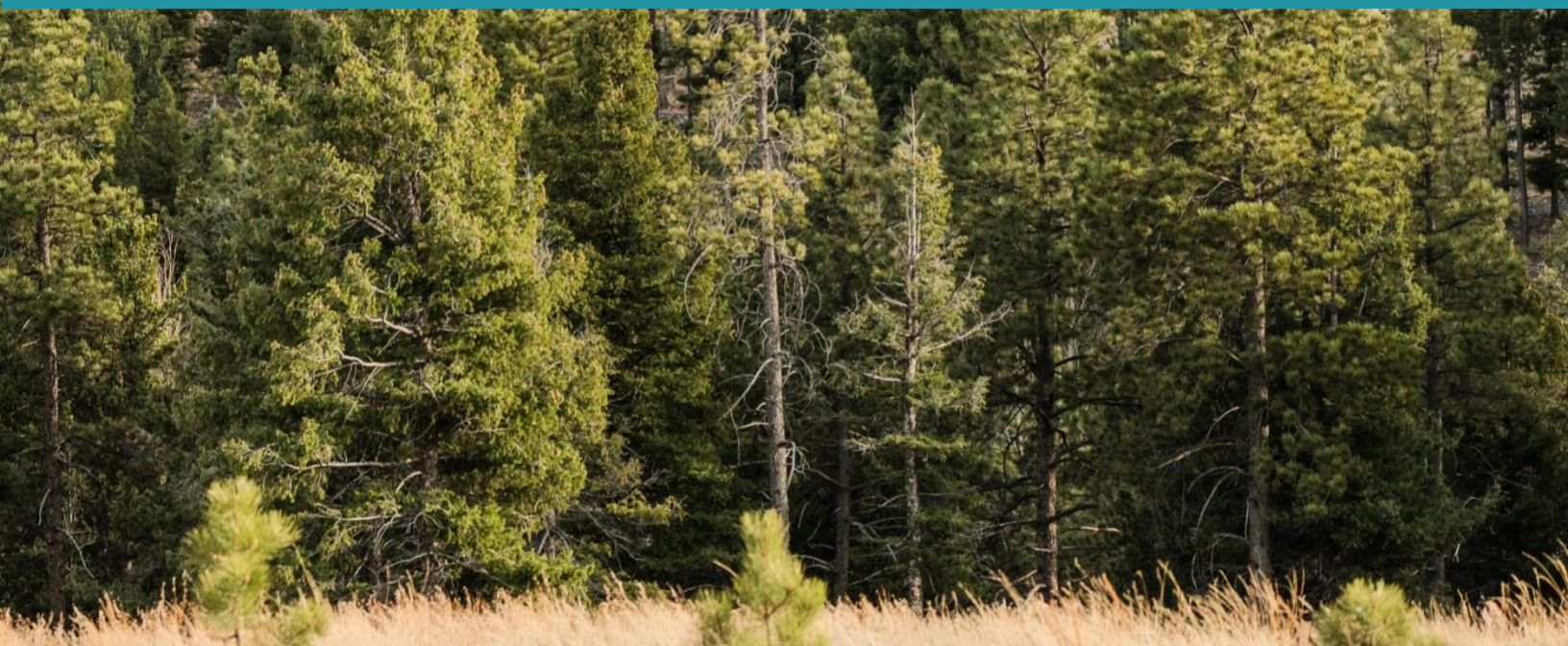


COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TOOLKIT

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CONTENTS

Welcome!.....3

- What is Destination Stewardship?

Community Impact.....4

- Businesses Making a Difference!

Ways to Give Back to Your Community.....6

- Donation and Volunteer Opportunities
  - Care and Share
  - Concrete Couch
  - Cultural Office
  - Fountain Creek Watershed
  - Habitat for Humanity
  - Palmer Land Conservancy
  - PikeRide
  - Rock Mountain Field Institute
  - Trails and Open Spaces

Assets to Use.....14

- Social Media Post Examples
  - Link for Photo Assets
  - Posts
  - Example Social Media Messaging
- Other Advertising Assets
- Copy for Email Confirmations & Websites

Leave No Trace Information.....19

Resources & Articles.....20

WELCOME!

WHAT IS DESTINATION STEWARDSHIP?

Destination Stewardship is a community-centered and collaborative approach to tourism. It is the careful and responsible protection of something considered worth caring for and preserving while also balancing the destination's financial, environmental, cultural and historical resources. Destination Stewardship is designed to enhance the quality of life for residents and the quality of experience for visitors. Visit Colorado Springs is dedicated to supporting and promoting responsible tourism. As a Destination Marketing Organization, we look after the assets in the region and strive to protect them for our visitors and locals for the future. Learn more about our Destination Stewardship efforts here.

ARE YOU A STEWARD?

Do you care about Colorado Springs and the Pikes Peak Region? Then simply, yes! Being a destination steward means you are someone who takes initiative toward preserving the economic vitality, the social and cultural life, and a healthy environment of a destination. A daunting task to do by yourself! Good thing you are not alone. This call to action is not something that can be accomplished by one person. Being a steward also means you get involved in your community, practice sustainability, and protect the long-term well-being of the destination. There are many people, neighbors and businesses that are already taking initiative to be more involved in the community and support destination stewardship. So, how will you get involved?

WHAT SHOULD I DO?

Utilize this toolkit! As members of the community, we have a unique opportunity to create and represent the kind of destination we want to live in. It matters what stories we share with visitors. Together, let's represent the Pikes Peak Region by showing visitors what makes our destination more than just a destination. It is a community, and one where we invite visitors to be temporary members of our community while they stay with us.

As stewards, a great way to motivate people to care for the Pikes Peak region is to pass along information and to share stories of how you interact with the community. In this toolkit, you will find resources and examples to get started or to elevate your efforts in promoting destination stewardship.

Thank you for being a part of the conversation!

COMMUNITY IMPACT

When people and businesses choose to contribute to the community, no matter the size of the contribution, there is an opportunity to make a change for the better. This change could form stronger and more resilient communities that are better equipped to support and uplift each other. Help raise awareness of problems or concerns the community is facing and start the conversation around how to make long-term change. Start with your neighborhood, your local restaurants and shops, or even your local trails and parks.

Here are a handful of businesses in Colorado Springs that are actively making a difference and giving back to the community in a way that makes sense for the type of business they are.

BUSINESSES MAKING A DIFFERENCE!



Richards Rubbish Roundup

Motivated to address the growing litter problem in the Pikes Peak Region and deeply committed to regularly keeping waterways, trails, medians, highway exits, and other public areas free of litter. Richards Rubbish Roundup host weekly volunteer meetups every Tuesday to clean up our city. Consider volunteering!

Website: Richards Rubbish Roundup

Goat Patch Brewing Co.

Community is at the core of their business. Each year they choose two nonprofits for their Bleating Heart Initiative where 25 cents of every Red Ale pint sold goes to either organization. Every Tuesday they host a local organization that is changing the Colorado Springs community for the better. From 5-9pm every dollar from every pint sold goes directly back to the featured organization. Check them out on a Tuesday!

Website: Goat Patch Brewing Company



UpaDowna

Dedicated to providing access to outdoor adventures for all, UpaDowna hosts events and programs that empower individuals and create healthier communities along with fostering respect for the environment. They offer the Pikes Peak Region with free and discounted programs to educate the community and provide outdoor adventures for all ages, abilities, and backgrounds. Find an event!

Website: UpDowna

Mountain Equipment Recyclers

100% of MER's profits go towards charitable causes in the Colorado Springs area. They started out as a consignment gear shop with the goal of giving back to relief programs that assisted PTSD-affected soldiers and now have many nonprofits and advocacy groups added to their partner's list. MER strives to offer high-quality gear at discounted prices while also supporting the local community. Find some gear!

Website: Mountain Equipment Recyclers

Who Gives a SCRAP

The main goal of Who Gives s SCRAP is to divert common household and crafting materials from landfills through re-purposing and creative reuse. So far, they have diverted 460 total tons from the landfill. This donation-based local craft supplies store sells secondhand materials and offers classes to take like an intro to sewing. Volunteers and the community help support Who Gives a SCRAP!

Website: Who Gives a SCRAP

Clean & Safe Pilot Program



This 19-month pilot program with Downtown Colorado Springs is designed to create a clean, welcoming and safe environment in our urban center. The program supplies ambassadors that help guide tourists in town and supplemental private security that are available to call or text. This program also supplies professional outreach workers helping to support individuals in need of stable housing.

Website: Clean & Safe Pilot Program

WAYS TO GIVE BACK TO YOUR COMMUNITY

Giving back to your community plays a large role in destination stewardship! Donating or becoming a member of a local organization can help support their projects and efforts to maintain our natural and historical spaces or maintain the well-being of our community. Volunteering is a direct way of making a difference in your community, and it is a great opportunity to get to know your neighbors. Taking care of your community creates resilience in the destination.

Donation and Volunteer Opportunities

Looking to get more involved in your community but don't know where to start? Here are some ways you as a business can give back and make an impact on your community. No contribution is too little or too big when it comes to making a difference.



CARE AND SHARE
FOOD BANK FOR SOUTHERN COLORADO
A member of FEEDING AMERICA



Care and Share

1 in 7 people face hunger in Southern Colorado. Care and Share Food Bank strives to maximize access to nutritious food and meet the needs of each neighbor they serve. Care and Share ensures equitable and sustainable access to nutritious food and education by partnering with neighbors, communities, organizations, and supporters across Southern Colorado. Care and Share partners with food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, community centers, churches, and schools to provide food to various neighborhoods. Getting involved with Care and Share can look like:

- Volunteering – volunteer at their distribution centers and help sort and pack food. They also offer group volunteer experiences where companies or organizations can volunteer the whole team to help at one of their distribution centers, a Mobile Market, or a Sunny Side market location.

- Host a food drive – host a drive at your business and encourage customers to bring in non-perishables and then deliver the food to Care and Share when you are finished.
- Start an online fundraising campaign – create an individual or team page and set your goal then share your page to start making a difference.
- Monetary donations – donating just $25 will provide 62 meals
- Food donations – excepts food donations from manufacturers, produce growers, distributors and community members.
- Partnering – excepts partnerships from manufacturers, retailers, or farmers.

Learn more about Care and Share and more ways you can give back on their website:

Care and Share Food Bank | We believe no one should go hungry





Concrete Couch

Concrete Couch is a nonprofit organization that builds community by creating public art and creative spaces. Building with community groups, Concrete Couch helps create artwork that is meaningful and amazing for a local park, school or public space - anything from mosaics, murals and sculptures to anything you can dream of. They help coordinate, brainstorm, plan, educate and execute the project in a fun, exciting and educational way. Find a sense of community with Concrete Couch and create art that benefits the well-being of locals and creates conversation starters with tourists.

- Build a project with them – A great way to learn new skills and collaborate with others in your community.
- Second Saturday Sustainability Skill Share – A community event where tips, tricks and techniques are shared on different topics.

See more of their projects and learn how you can donate or get involved on their website:

Home | Concretecouch





Cultural Office of the Pikes Peak Region

Serving the Pikes Peak Region, the Cultural Office is a nonprofit local arts agency that works to ensure that the creative sector grows in economic vitality and depth of impact. They also ensure that creative workers can thrive in our community and that the arts are leveraged to positively address economic development, cultural tourism, education, and quality of life. The Cultural Office connects our arts community with peers in the tourism industry and encourages participation among local artists and tourists. Together, we can ensure that arts, culture and the creative industries are valued.

- Join the Colorado Arts Action Network – help advocate for Colorado's creative future.

Learn how you can get involved and donate on their website:

Cultural Office of the Pikes Peak Region





Fountain Creek Watershed District

Committed to the long-term resilience and vitality of our watershed and its diverse communities, the Fountain Creek Watershed serves as stewards working to protect, restore and sustain the watershed's health. To protect the environment and the community, projects are built around the creek that require careful planning and innovative solutions. Other than improving water quality,

the Fountain Creek Watershed works to educate and engage the community on different topics such as stormwater management, pollinators, creek cleanups, rainwater harvesting, and more.

- Become a Watershed Warrior – a volunteer program dedicated to building awareness, connection, and community around the health of the watershed.
- Host a Creek Week Cleanup – Choose a site and encourage others to get outside and help clean our natural landscapes.

Volunteer, sponsor, or adopt a waterway and learn more about the watershed on their website:

Homepage Fountain Creek Watershed District







Habitat for Humanity

Bringing people together to build homes centered around community and hope, Habitat for Humanity is a nonprofit organization that builds or improves homes. Habitat for Humanity advocacy supports policies that increase the supply of and promote access to affordable housing for communities. Get involved with Habitat for Humanity by:

- Volunteering – 90% of every Habitat home is built by volunteers. Volunteer in:
    - Construction – the construction team welcomes skilled and beginners but all volunteers in construction must be at least 16 years old to participate.
    - Restore – Habitat for Humanity's donation center where volunteers organize merchandise, assist customers, and process donations.
- Donating – financial donations are accepted along with material donations such as unwanted furnishings, appliances, building supplies, vehicles, and buildable land.

Join their newsletter and learn more about how to get involved on their website:

Home - Pikes Peak Habitat for Humanity





Palmer Land Conservancy

The Palmer Land Conservancy stewards resilient landscapes, habitats, economies, and communities through conservation and economic strength. They are committed to connecting people to the land and nature through conservation of open spaces and public parks and bringing green spaces to our urban centers. They help protect local farms and ranches, connecting people to essential local food systems and strengthening rural communities and economies. The Palmer Land Conservancy is committed to safeguarding the health and resiliency of landscapes that support wildlife, biodiversity, wetlands and waterways, along with developing initiatives that address the needs of water in the West.

- Become a member and donate – help support their efforts.
- Attend their events – look for upcoming events and learn more about their projects

Learn more about The Palmer Land Conservancy and read their blog on their website:

Land for Life | Palmer Land Conservancy





PikeRide

PikeRide is a nonprofit electric bike share that offers flexible and affordable transportation in Colorado Springs, Manitou Springs, and Old Colorado City. Not only do they make transportation

easier, but they are also committed to providing low-income neighbors access to affordable transportation and advocating for safer cycling in our city. Support PikeRide by:

- Volunteering
    - Volunteer Bike Mechanic – work on their ebikes and provide maintenance and repairs. You will receive comprehensive training to deepen your knowledge of bike mechanics and equip you with valuable skills. Must be 18 years or older.
    - Trail Cleanup Volunteer – PikeRide hosts clean-ups throughout the year and are always looking for volunteers.
    - Volunteer Models – want to model for PikeRide? Photo shoots are flexible and work with your schedule.

Check out their local events page and learn more on their website:

PikeRide Electric Bike Share - Public Bike Rental Colorado Springs





Rocky Mountain Field Institute

Through volunteer-based trail and restoration projects, environmental education and restoration research, RMFI conserves and protects public lands in Southern Colorado. RMFI envisions a world where their work fosters vibrant and healthy natural systems and sustainable opportunities for recreation that are respected and cared for by the public. RMFI acts with responsibility and care with the projects they work on, and they foster relationships to build a community of people dedicated to the pursuit of healthy public lands. Each year, RMFI's volunteers care for the trails throughout the Pikes Peak Region.

- Volunteering:
    - As an individual – have a free day? Check out their volunteer calendar and find a day that works for you
    - As a corporate team – a great team-building activity while giving back to the Pikes Peak Region

- As a student or youth group – a great education opportunity for a class
- Gear Volunteer – help with equipment maintenance
- Photo Volunteer – take photos of the work that is done

Check out their blog and learn about their programs on their website:

Home Page | Rocky Mountain Field Institute





Trails & Open Space Coalition

Trails & Open Space Coalition has grown into a community-driven organization that ensures parks, trails, and open spaces that make the Pikes Peak Region so special remain part of the shared future. Trails & Open Space Coalition is the driving force to ensure the community's voice is heard when planning and implementing policies that prioritize outdoor spaces and work with local governments, businesses and stakeholders to make the push. They are a nonprofit that is 100% member funded.

- Become a member and support their projects – help protect parks, trails, and open spaces
- Use their Marlow Outdoor Search Tool – an interactive outdoor discovery tool

Learn more about their project and check out their Marlow tool for planning your next outdoor adventure on their website:

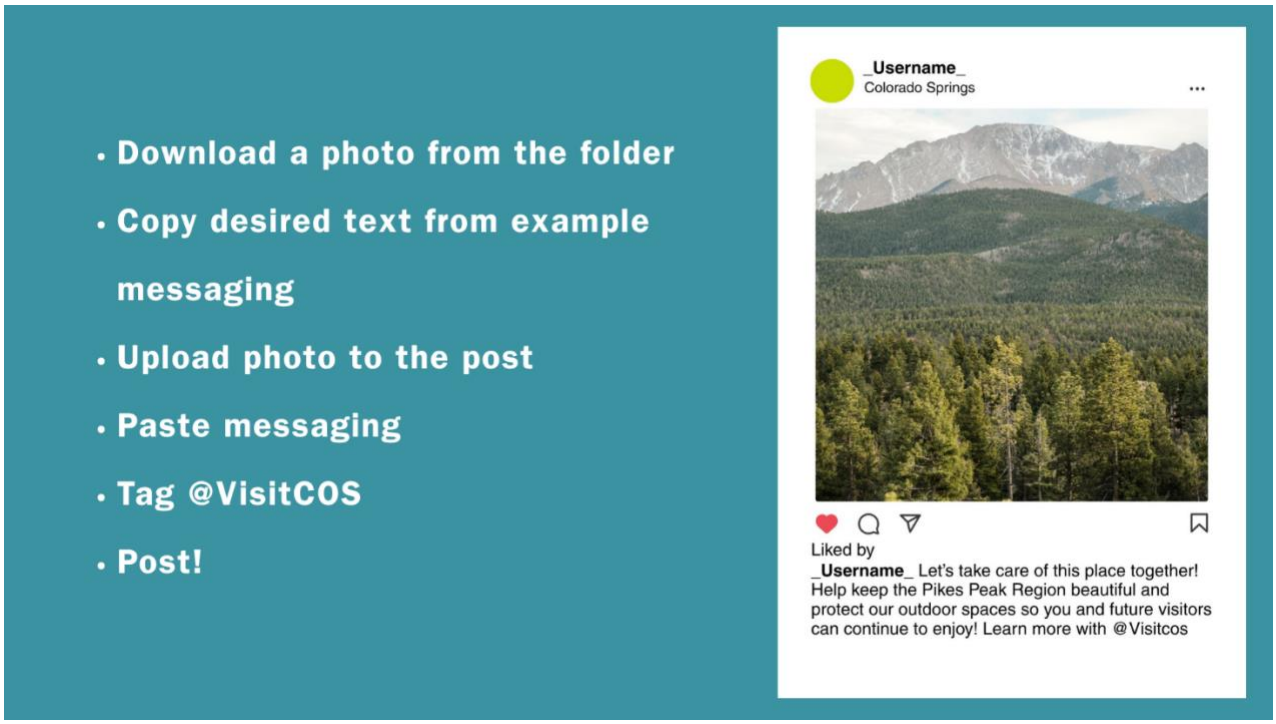
TOSC - Trails & Open Space Coalition

ASSETS TO USE

Tourists become a part of the destination when they visit. What they do, what they say, how they behave, and how they spend makes an impact on the destination. Start the conversation on how to care for the Pikes Peak Region by posting on social media.

Post on Social Media

A great way to start the conversation on destination stewardship is by posting on social media. The people who follow you are most likely visitors or locals, so share with your audience that you care about the Pikes Peak Region and want to encourage others to do the same. In this toolkit you will find example messaging and a link to a photo library to help you post about destination stewardship and help promote Colorado Springs in a more responsible way.



Photos

To access our library of stewardship photos, click on this link that will take you to a folder with all the photos you need to promote destination stewardship and responsible tourism.

Photos to use: Stewardship Partners Toolkit – Photo Assets

Terms of use for photos:

- These photos are selected for promoting destination stewardship
- If there are any logos on the photo, there must be no removal or cropping of the logo
- If you use one of our photos, you must tag @VisitCOS in your post

Posts to Use

In this Google drive folder, you will find already made posts you can use. Just select which post you would like to share, write a caption or choose from the example messaging then be sure to tag @VisitCOS in your post.

For carousel posts- carousel posts will be labeled in the dive. Each photo is numbered to indicate the order to place in the carousel.

Drive: Community Impact Toolkit – Social Media Posts

Terms of use for social media posts in drive:

- No removal or cropping of any logos
- You must tag VisitCOS in your post

Example Messaging

- Let's take care of this place together! Help keep the Pikes Peak region beautiful and protect our outdoor spaces so you and future visitors can continue to enjoy! Learn more with @Visitcos
- From breathtaking landscapes of Pikes Peak and scenic trails through pine trees to inspiring mural artwork, there is something worth caring for in Colorado Springs. Discover more with @Visitcos
- The Pikes Peak Region is a beautiful and unique destination, let's do our part to keep it this way! Here are some Leave No Trace principles for your next visit to the trails:
  - Plan ahead and prepare – make sure to check local weather before going on an adventure.
  - Stick to the trails – traveling off the designated path can lead to damage to the landscape.
  - Leave it as you find it – take a picture it will last longer! Leave natural objects in nature
  - Trash is trash- pack all trash and leftover food out with you, this includes peels and cores!
  - Be careful with fire – always check if there are any local fire risks and fire bans before making a campfire.
  - Keep wildlife wild – Interacting and feeding wildlife can impact their natural behaviors and damage their health. Take a picture but keep your distance!

- Share our trails and parks – We are all here to enjoy the wonderful view! Let's respect other people and preserve the quality of their experience.

Learn more about how to care for Colorado Springs with @VisitCOS.

- Your visit matters! We encourage you to visit local restaurants and shops to find an authentic Colorado Springs experience. Discover more with @VisitCOS.
- Small actions have a big impact. Help preserve the beautiful Pikes Peak Region!
- Leave No Trace on the trails and in the city!

OTHER ADVERTISING ASSETS

Besides social media posts, here are some other media for you to use to help promote destination stewardship and responsible tourism. This link to a google drive folder contains other media such as flyers, guidebooks, and other creative that can remain digital or can be printed if you choose.

Terms of use for other assets:

- If there are logos in the media, there must be no removal or cropping of the logo

Google Drive Folder: Other Advertising Assets – Community Impact Toolkit

If you have any questions regarding any of the advertising assets, please contact: Melissa@VisitCOS.com.

COPY FOR EMAIL CONFIRMATIONS & WEBSITES

Would you like to mention responsible tourism and destination stewardship through email confirmations or somewhere on your website? Here are some examples of messaging that can inspire you to motivate visitors to take care of Colorado Springs and the Pikes Peak Region.

- Thank you for choosing Colorado Springs for your stay! Our city is full of breathtaking views, adventurous outdoor recreation and lively communities. As you explore the Pikes Peak Region, we encourage you to join us in taking care of this place together and preserving the natural wonders this destination has to offer. Here is how to take care of Colorado Springs during your stay with Leave No Trace Principles:
    - Know before you go – The weather can change quickly in Colorado Springs, so be prepared and check the local weather and trail conditions before setting out for hikes.
    - Stick to the trails – Stay on marked paths and avoid traveling from trails, as this can lead to damage to the landscape.
    - Leave it as you find it – Preserve the story of the landscape by leaving natural objects where they are.
    - Trash is trash – leave the space better than you found it! Even if it is not your trash, it is still good to pack it out with you and keep the trails free from trash.
    - Be careful with fire – please check if there are any local fire risks or fire bans.
    - Keep wildlife wild – please do not feed and interact with wildlife along with minimizing interactions with wildlife and pets.
    - Share our trails & parks – We are all here to enjoy the same wonderful view! Be respectful towards others and preserve the quality of their experience.

    Learn more about Leave No Trace here: LNT.org. Thank you for taking care of Colorado Springs!

- Thank you for booking with us! As a reminder, Colorado Springs sits at an altitude of 6,035 feet above sea level. So be sure to take care of yourself when traveling from a lower altitude. Here are some tips on how to adjust to the altitude and how to prevent altitude sickness:
    - Give your body time to adjust – on your first day visiting, plan to explore the Pikes Peak Region at lower altitudes. Manitou Springs climbs to 6,320 feet and further west, Victor and Cripple Creek are over 9,500 feet. The summit of Pikes Peak sits at 14,115 feet. Give yourself time to acclimate and stay below 7,000 feet on your first day.

- Avoid strenuous activities on the first day – there are plenty of outdoor adventures to discover in Colorado Springs including beginner-friendly trails. Save the more intense hikes like the Incline or Pikes Peak for when you are adjusted to the altitude.
- Limit alcohol beverage intake – Alcohol binds oxygen and water and robs your body of these two important nutrients.
- Drink more water and replenish electrolytes – Stay hydrated! The air is dryer at higher altitudes, and you get dehydrated quicker. Drinking twice your normal water intake is suggested at higher altitudes.
- Eat more calories – your body will naturally burn more calories as it works harder to get enough oxygen at a higher altitude. Eat more calories to keep your body energized for your adventures.
- Use sun protection – the atmosphere is thinner at higher elevations, which means there is less protection from the sun's UV rays. Apply SPF to any exposed skin and consider wearing sun-protective clothing.
- Travel with a companion – everyone experiences altitude change differently, so it is recommended to bring someone along on more intense adventures. If someone begins to experience severe coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath or chest pain, it is best to bring them back to a lower altitude as quickly as possible.
- Check with your doctor – if you are worried about altitude sickness or have experienced it before, consult your doctor before exerting yourself at high altitudes.
- Rest and recover – after high-energy or high-altitude activities it is recommended to allow your body to recover.

- Thank you for visiting Colorado Springs! Weather can change quickly in Colorado, so be sure to pack layers and prepare for unexpected rain and weather. When visiting here are some essentials we recommend you bring:
  - High SPF sunscreen
  - Hat
  - Sunglasses
  - Coat, sweater and/or hoodie
  - Sturdy walking shoes or hiking sandals
  - Lip balm
  - Moisturizer

LEAVE NO TRACE INFORMATION

9 out of 10 people who visit the outdoors are uninformed about Leave No Trace and the importance of minimizing their impact. That is a lot of people who may be causing significant preventable damage to the natural spaces we all love to visit. The Leave No Trace Organization is built on the belief that if people take care of the outdoors, even the simple actions to cherish the outdoors, we will all benefit. These principles are more than just picking up trash; they are fostering a cooperative spirit of stewardship.

The 7 Leave No Trace Principles are the foundation of how to think about your impact when you go outside and how to reduce it.

Here are the 7 Leave No Trace Principles:

1. Plan Ahead & Prepare
2. Travel & Camp on Durable Surfaces
3. Dispose of Waste Properly
4. Leave What You Find
5. Minimize Campfire Impacts
6. Respect Wildlife
7. Be Considerate of Others

© Leave No Trace: www.LNT.org

Learn more about the organization and how to properly promote Leave No Trace:

Outdoor Ethics Education & the 7 Principles | Leave No Trace

RESOURCES & ARTICLES

Links to other information and tools to use.

Leave No Trace Courses

The organization Leave No Trace provides free online courses on varied topics that apply to LNT. Gain valuable knowledge, share what you have learned with others and help protect the outdoors.

- 101 course
- Backcountry LNT
- Introduction to Effective Communication of LNT
- Daily Life LNT
- Urban Connections LNT
- For kids: PEAK Online
- LNT for Elopement Photographers

Articles from Leave No Trace

- 5 Ways To Make Your Cleanup More Sustainable
- Stop The Leave No Trace Policing

Destination iQ

Provides services on destination management and marketing. They have an insights page that highlights how communities create enriching experiences for tourists and residents. If you are interested in a destination management perspective check out these articles and learn how destinations work towards better futures for visitors and residents.

- Tourism Starts at Home: Why Residents Are the Heart of Sustainable Growth
- The Resident as Storyteller: Unlocking the Most Authentic Tourism Narrative
- Tourism's Next Chapter Belongs to Once-Overlooked Communities

Pikes Peak Outdoors

Is your hub for all things outdoor recreation.

If you like looking at the data, check out their Data Hub that provides information on the region's natural resources, recreation, and socioeconomic data.

- Data Hub - Pikes Peak Outdoors

Their guide on 50 things you can do to Promote Stewardship

- 50 Things You Can Do to Promote Stewardship TODAY.docx

Check out their Conservation page with many organizations and groups around the region and state who are focused on various conservation efforts.

- Conservation - Pikes Peak Outdoors

Cultural Office Resources

Here are some articles to get more familiar with advocating for the arts.

- 10 Reasons to Support the Arts
- What If All Community Development Started with Local Arts and Culture?
- What If More Artists Ran for City Council?

Find all the articles here: Advocacy Toolkit - Cultural Office of the Pikes Peak Region

Colorado Tourism Office

- Keep Wildlife Wild in Colorado's Bear County
    - Exploring the wild is a great way to experience wildlife in their habitat but it is important to do so responsibly.
- Do Colorado Right with Sustainable Travel
    - Learn how you can be more responsible when you travel.
- Explore History & Heritage in the Pikes Peak Region
    - Read and learn about the rich history of the Pikes Peak Region and why people love outdoor adventures here.

Event Service Professionals Association (ESPA)

- ESPA, Visit Indy Leader: 6 Priorities Redefining Successful Meetings
    - Read about what makes a meeting successful by including a mindset of what can the meeting leave behind for the community that hosts it, as Roberta Tisdul with Visit Indy explores the philosophy of destination stewardship for meetings and groups.

Rocky Mountain ADA Center

- The ADA and Outdoor Recreation Free Online Course
    - Learn about how the Americans with Disabilities Act applies to outdoor recreation, common barriers that limit access for people with disabilities, and best practices for creating inclusive outdoor experiences.

Scientific Articles – Destination Stewardship

Looking to read more in-depth articles on Destination Stewardship? Here are a few research articles that helped inspire this toolkit:

- Creative Tourism as a driver for sustainable development: A model for advancing SDGs through community-based tourism and environmental stewardship.
- Community-Led Sustainable Tourism in Rural Areas: Enhancing Wine Tourism Destination Competitiveness and Local Empowerment
- Local Community Perspective on Responsible Tourism and Destination Sustainability