



MONTEZUMA INSPIRE COALITION

STRATEGIC PLAN
2020 - 2025

Every Kid in Every Zip





VISION

Our vision is for youth of all ages and backgrounds in Montezuma County to respect, care for and enjoy themselves, their communities and the natural world. By encouraging them to share these values with their family, friends and across generations, we seek to build an inclusive, strong, healthy and resilient community and economy.

MISSION

Create meaningful social and outdoor experiences for youth in our community to foster connection, curiosity and discovery.

VALUES

1 We strive for **comprehensive and lasting impact** in our community. This requires working with integrity and passion and being inclusive, open minded and adaptive.

2

Community is at the center of our work. We focus first on people (youth and families) to foster trust, social and emotional intelligence, self-care, and self-empowerment.

3

We have a deep appreciation for the **lands in our communities**; we promote stewardship and conservation of the natural and agricultural landscape of the region.



**SEEKING TO BUILD
AN INCLUSIVE,
STRONG, HEALTHY
AND RESILIENT
COMMUNITY AND
ECONOMY**





SCOPE AND PARTICIPATION

Montezuma Inspire Coalition (MIC) serves youth living in Montezuma County, including the population centers of Cortez, Mancos, Dolores, and Towac.

MIC brings together a diverse group of nonprofits, businesses and governmental organizations that have a great passion for youth and the outdoors.

OUR PARTNERS

- ▶ City of Cortez Parks and Recreation
- ▶ Dolores River Boating Advocates
- ▶ OMNI
- ▶ Mancos Creative District
- ▶ Medicine Horse Center
- ▶ Montezuma Land Conservancy and Fozzie's Farm
- ▶ San Juan Mountains Association
- ▶ School Community Youth Collaborative
- ▶ Southwest Conservation Corps
- ▶ Team Up
- ▶ Montezuma School to Farm Project School Outdoor Learning Lab (SOLL Hub) :
 - Bombdiggity
 - Community Signing and Music Making
 - Delta Communities that Care
 - Dolores River Anglers
 - Evolution Gym Cortez
 - Lily Russo Yoga
 - Mancos Conservation District
 - Montelores Childhood Council
 - Pleasantree Farm
 - Raven Narratives
 - Wildfire Adapted Partnership



**BREAK DOWN
BARRIERS
AND CONNECT
YOUTH TO THE
OUTDOORS**



PROBLEM STATEMENT AND HISTORY

MIC was created in 2015 in response to the Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) **Inspire Initiative** and **Generation Wild**, catalyzed by the desire to remove barriers that prevent youth from accessing the outdoors.

There are 6,000 youth under 18 in Montezuma County, and 2,000 youth ages 18-24. The county is characterized as rural with 16.3% of the community living in poverty. Geography and population nodes within the county are widespread, which can cause youth and families to struggle with transportation, access to the internet, completing education, and participation in supporting programs.

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San Juan Mountains Association

Using results from a 2016 community survey, MIC learned that all age groups in Montezuma County would like to be outdoors more often, younger kids (preschool and elementary age) tend to spend more time outside than their older peers. There is a significant drop in the amount of time spent outdoors at the middle school level, when academic and social expectations dramatically shift. Being "too busy" is the primary barrier preventing middle and high school-age youth from getting outdoors. Other voiced deterrents include no one to go with, lack of transportation, lack of knowledge of where to go or how to get there, no money to acquire the necessities for outdoor activities, and family obligations.

All groups responded that they would like to spend more time outdoors and that being outside would be beneficial to their health. Youth reported that they like to do a variety of activities in the outdoors with younger children preferring outdoors sports, camping

and running outdoors with their families and older youth preferring to relax, play sports, camp, hunt and fish. Preferred places to be outdoors include back yards, parks, lakes and rivers.

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MIC programs were thoughtfully designed to address these barriers and interests. In 2020 after three years of implementation, partners updated this information and conducted a preliminary assessment of effectiveness by conducting program evaluations, collecting feedback from program providers and participants, administering a small-scale a



community survey, and updating community data (2020 Community Snapshot). The results show that MIC programs are reaching youth and getting them outdoors often with favorable results. However, many of the same barriers from 2016 continue to persist.

To overcome these barriers requires much more coordination within the community, specifically the school district and Native American community, to bolster program effectiveness. One specific identified gap is the provision of career pathway opportunities such as internships for youth ages 18-25. Additionally, more locally refined evaluation and data is needed to truly measure impact and effectiveness.



Montezuma School to Farm Project

IMPACT GOALS AND EVALUATION

Youth participant goals are measured in terms of gross number of program participants. Once an evaluation system is established to track unique individual participation, goals will be updated with more refined information to track individuals engaged in programming.

The MIC Coordinator and Steering Committee commit to developing action plans that will be a basis for reviewing and evaluating progress toward stated milestones on an annual basis.

Youth Program & Pathway Participant Goals (Gross)

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Programs	5,768	6,223	6,964	7,178	7,408
Pathways	88	88	88	88	88
Totals	5,856	6,311	7,052	7,266	7,496

Goals	Strategies	Objectives
1 Youth have easy access to data-informed outdoor programming that builds lifelong connections to the natural world, improves their overall well-being, physical health, self-esteem, and leadership skills.	<p>Develop a continuum of inclusive programming with broad reach across geography, ethnicity, income and age.</p> <p>Provide programs that are prosocial and provide youth and families with a substance-free space.</p> <p>Improve and increase building of protective factors within programming.</p> <p>Increase opportunities to engage the Native American community.</p> <p>Implement integrated, science-based, standards-aligned outdoor programs (classroom and field trips) at all schools.</p> <p>Implement outdoor-aligned afterschool and summer programs, including field trips and family activities.</p> <p>Adapt or develop data-informed programming to be relevant and impactful for participants/ community.</p>	<p>By August 2020 Implement a collaborative program design process/system incorporating evaluation data as available.</p> <p>Connect with identified key partners (examples include: Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Ute Mountain Utes, Cultural Center, Libraries, Butler Corner Nature Center) to share the strategic plan, determine opportunities for collaboration and methods for engagement.</p> <p>December 2020 Finalize the MIC program evaluation plan that can: 1) establish unique identifier to quantitatively track the number of individual youth participants across programs and 2) create a system to qualitatively assess the impact of MIC programs on individuals over time.</p> <p>Incorporate social emotional component in all MIC programming; provide for social emotional learning for MIC partners and youth.</p> <p>By December 2021 Evaluate programs per the MIC program evaluation plan.</p>

Goals	Strategies	Objectives	
2	<p>Youth have easy access to pathway experiences encouraging future careers in outdoor-related fields.</p>	<p>Develop and implement mentorship, apprenticeship, and internship pathways.</p> <p>Increase opportunities to engage the Tribal community.</p> <p>Ensure pathways are designed on a continuum to be progressive/progressive (i.e., crew > internship > job placement) for youth ages 11-25+ years.</p> <p>Improve and increase building of protective factors to improve the overall well-being, physical health, self-esteem of youth, and leadership skills through pathway programming.</p> <p>Collaborate with community businesses and nonprofit organizations to bolster pathways.</p> <p>Develop a pathways education pipeline that systematically inspires middle to high schoolers to participate in pathway programs.</p>	<p>By December 2021</p> <p>Establish a standing MIC Pathways Work Group.</p> <p>Develop a MIC Pathways logic model to inform activities, outputs/outcomes and evaluation, using the Southwest Conservation Corps logic Model as a starting place.</p> <p>Develop and implement a new orientation curriculum/system for interns and mentors to create more productive and meaningful intern experiences.</p> <p>Develop and implement an improved recruitment program that targets students through in-school, after-school and summer camp outreach activities.</p> <p>Incorporate SEI/L training in all MIC pathways.</p> <p>Incorporate outdoor education enrichment opportunities provided by MIC partners for each pathways participant.</p>

Goals	Strategies	Objectives	
3	<p>The community provides for quality physical sites with equitable access allowing for increased appeal of and participation in outdoor activities.</p>	<p>Facilitate the inclusion/improvement of nature playscapes in existing playgrounds and new areas, ensuring that outdoor spaces are accessible and inclusive of sensory experiences.</p> <p>Invest in enhanced infrastructure and/or development of existing outdoor places to increase opportunities for youth to access the outdoors.</p> <p>Increase opportunities to engage the Tribal community.</p> <p>Enhance accessibility and community understanding of federal public lands and associated natural resources in Montezuma County.</p>	<p>By December 2021</p> <p>Create a Places Work Group.</p> <p>Inventory locations where the addition of accessible places can enhance programming.</p> <p>Identify community partnerships to support implementation (e.g., Towns of Mancos and Dolores, Montezuma County School Districts, Cortez Cultural Center, Butler Corner).</p> <p>Establish procedure for implementation (i.e., including cases where MIC-involved partners do not have site ownership).</p> <p>By December 2025</p> <p>Support the City of Cortez in the implementation of their three capital projects: Neighborhood Park, Geer and Carpenter Natural Areas, and Mancos to Cortez Trail.</p> <p>Coordinate with federal land managers to identify and implement stewardship projects that improve access and enhance recreation on public lands (e.g., install interpretive and directional signs, rehabilitate trails, etc.).</p>

Goals	Strategies	Objectives
<p>4 No barriers keep youth and families from experiencing the local outdoors.</p>	<p>Develop communication/outreach systems by which all youth and families know of available outdoor programs (e.g. app, school communication, newsletter, website, etc.).</p> <p>Enhance the gear-lending library, ensuring broad accessibility.</p> <p>Establish resources to provide youth transportation to otherwise inaccessible outdoors spaces.</p> <p>Work with other local coalitions to collaboratively solve shared challenges/barriers.</p> <p>Increase opportunities to engage the Tribal community.</p>	<p>By December 2021 Assess current communication/outreach tools and pilot at least five new mechanisms with tracking to enable evaluation of the tools' effectiveness in making people aware of programming (e.g., Facebook – using events tool and tracking engagement, website – tracking page hits, e-newsletter tracking click-through's).</p> <p>Create a sub-group to revamp/enhance the Gear Lending Library.</p> <p>By December 2022 Assess transportation gaps and develop a transportation plan that incorporates existing and potentially new transportation options.</p>



Southwest Conservation Corps

Goals	Strategies	Objectives	
5	<p>The community is well served by MIC as a well-known, effective, adaptable and resilient region-wide collaboration.</p>	<p>Annually evaluate strategic direction, capacity and finances to ensure integrity of plans for the future and sustainability of the coalition.</p> <p>Ensure strong connections between programmatic partners, Steering Committee and the community at large, developing opportunities for their engagement in MIC.</p> <p>Engage with community partners to identify collaboration and funding opportunities that enhance programming.</p>	<p>By December 2020 Convene a Youth Advisory Council that is representative of the youth served by MIC to provide ongoing input on how to improve/enhance MIC programming.</p>
		<p>Engage new Steering Committee members to be inclusive of community partners and interested program providers.</p>	<p>Provide community with access to mission, vision, goals and engagement opportunities.</p>
		<p>Establish clear and frequent communication channels between the Steering Committee, programmatic partners and the community at large. (e.g. Host MIC-wide meetings (minimum annually) that engage program providers and the community.)</p>	<p>Use collaborative program design system to inform the 2021-2023 budget.</p>
		<p>Identify and pursue opportunities to match GOCO funding on an annual basis.</p>	<p>By December 2021 Evaluate the collaborative process using the process quality survey, scoring more than 4.91 (baseline from April 2020).</p>
		<p>Establish frequent (quarterly) in-person connections between the MIC Coordinator and all three school districts (RE-1, RE-6, RE-4A).</p>	<p>Involve a representative from each school district in the MIC Steering Committee.</p>
		<p>Create and implement an outreach/marketing plan that addresses brand and community awareness, school communication and development of technology tools and explore option to utilize GOCO's Generation Wild communications program as a branding tool.</p>	<p>Evaluate additional revenue streams that can offset grant writing, such as fee-for-service, private donor fundraising and membership opportunities.</p>
		<p>By December 2022 Project annual budget needs beyond 2023.</p>	<p>Identify potential funding partners and create donor cultivation plans to further develop partnerships with those funders.</p>



Fozzie's Farm

DEFINITIONS

The following are common terminology and definitions utilized by MIC.

Coalition: A group of individuals representing diverse individuals, organizations, agencies, and businesses within the community who have agreed to work together to achieve a common goal.

Diversity: Understanding that each individual is unique, and recognizing our individual differences of race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, language, age, abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, marital status, parental status, physical traits, etc.

Equity: The quality of being fair and impartial; the absence of avoidable or remediable differences among groups of people, whether those groups are defined socially, economically, demographically or geographically (World Health Organization).

Inclusion: The process whereby every person – irrespective of age, disability, gender, religion, sexual preference or nationality – who wishes to can access and participate fully in all aspects of an activity or service in the same manner as any other member of the community; an environment in which all individuals are treated fairly and respectfully.

Outdoors: Any natural outside space, including places that are close to home as well as in the backcountry.

Pathways: Pre-professional experiences that connect youth to potential/future careers.

Programs: Events and activities, new and/or existing, that help youth and families experience the outdoors in and out of school.

Prosocial Behavior: Relating to or denoting behavior that is positive, helpful, and intended to promote social acceptance and friendship.

Prosocial Spaces: Spaces where prosocial behaviors are actively practiced and taught; these tend to be substance free.

Protective Factors: Individual or environmental characteristics, conditions, or behaviors that reduce the effects of stressful life events, increase an individual's ability to avoid risks or hazards, and promote social and emotional competence to thrive in all aspects of life, now and in the future (U.S. Centers for Disease Control).

Risk Factor: Any attribute, characteristic or exposure of an individual that increases the likelihood of developing a disease or injury (World Health Organization).

Social Emotional Intelligence/Learning (SEI/L): The ability of a person to identify, manage, and express emotions constructively and efficiently, including controlling impulses, expressing empathy, preserving in the face of challenges, and relating to others.

Youth: Children and young adults ages 3-24 years.

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