

The Next 75



2022-2026 Strategic Plan

Deepening our commitment to Colorado



Gates Family Foundation

2022-2026 Strategic Plan: Natural Resources

Wednesday, March 2
12 to 1 p.m.

AGENDA

Welcome

- Webinar overview and objectives

Presentation

- Gates Family Foundation Background
 - Mission, Vision, Values
- Strategic Plan Overview
 - Community feedback / development process
- What's Staying?
- What's New?

Discussion

- Questions from attendees

Closing

- Next steps and future engagement

Building on 75
years of
addressing
some of
Colorado's
toughest
challenges



- Celebrating 75 years of impact
- More than \$456 million in grants since founding
- Continuously evolving while maintaining intense focus on people, communities, and natural resources of Colorado.





Strategic Plan Process: *Throughout 2021*

LOOKING AHEAD

Trends, Challenges
& Forecasting

REACHING OUT

Community Feedback

LOOKING BACK

Internal Reflection
& Assessment

Gates Family Foundation

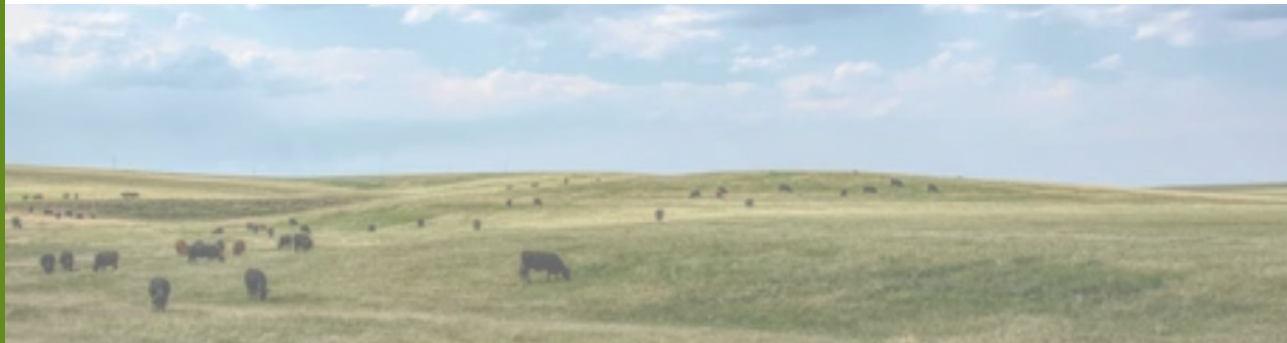
Mission & Vision

MISSION

We work with partners and communities to build a more equitable, resilient, and sustainable Colorado for all.

VISION

A vibrant and verdant Colorado where all people and communities thrive.



Gates Family Foundation Values



RESPECT

CREATIVITY

ENGAGEMENT

PLACE

EQUITY



Commitment to Equity

We prioritize individuals and communities that have been historically marginalized by addressing systemic barriers and creating pathways to opportunity.

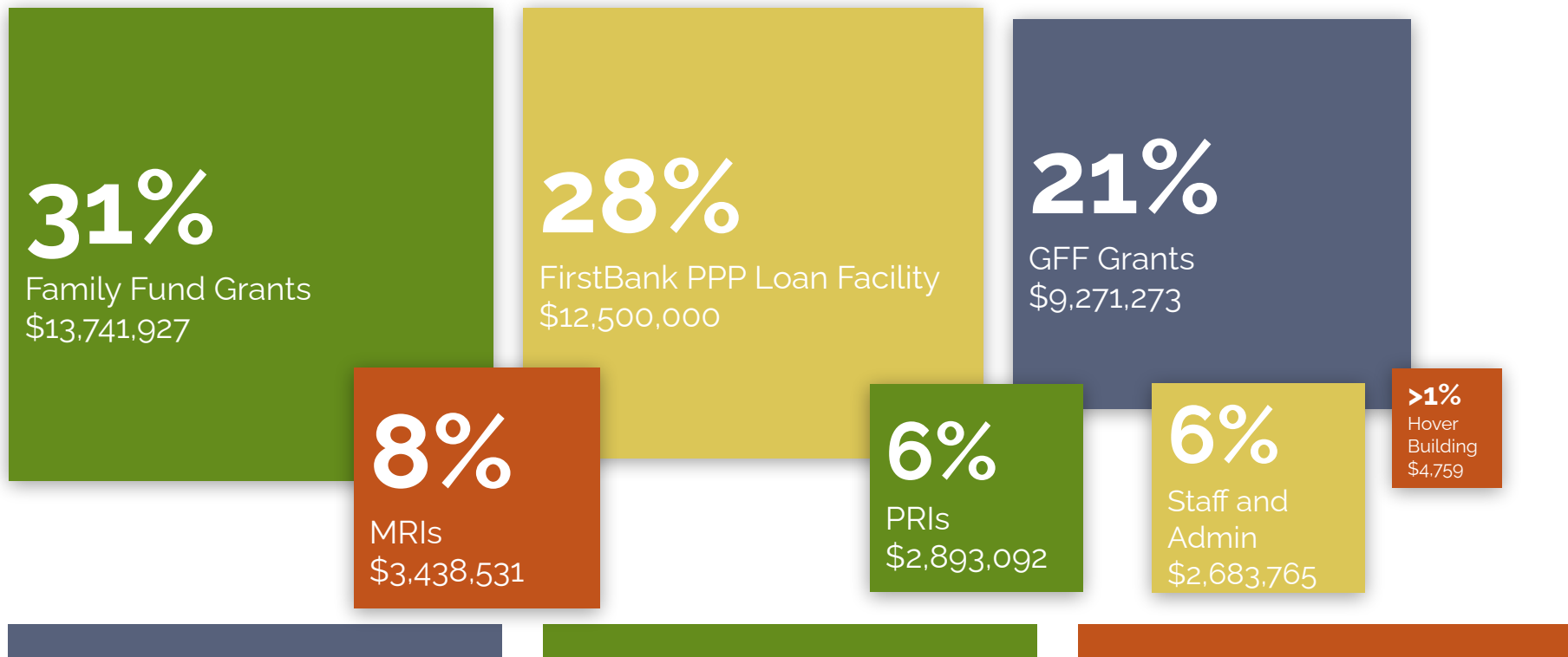


Foundation Approach

- We use both financial and non-financial tools to serve partners and advance core strategies
- Our staff serve as connectors, resources and thought partners in the ecosystems where they work
- We intentionally convene and participate in multi-partner, systems-level work to drive innovative solutions
- We actively seek to collaborate with an even more diverse array of stakeholders and potential partners



2021 Total Philanthropic Activity: \$44.5M



2021 Strategic Grants Paid: \$5,699,000

39%

Natural Resources
\$2,232,000

39%

Education
\$2,209,500

15%

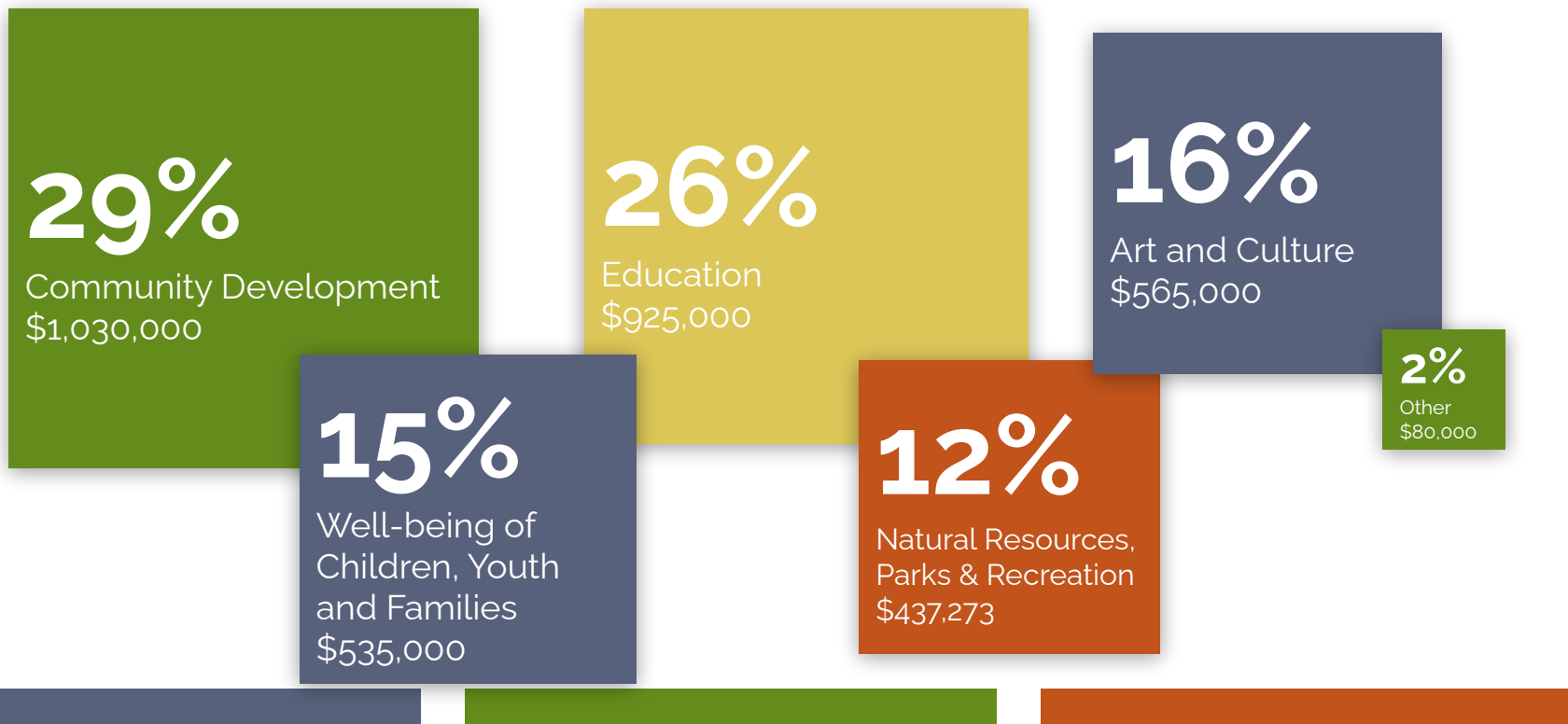
Community
Development
\$882,500

7%

Informed
Communities
\$375,000



2021 Responsive Grants Paid: \$3,572,273



What's New

- Foundation-wide focus on addressing **climate change** and advancing **diversity, equity and inclusion** across all programs
- Education increases focus on **rural education** (developing teacher talent, climate change education) and **out-of-system learning innovations**
- **Informed Communities** formally becomes a fourth program area
- Community Development topics (mobility, food systems, placemaking, community planning) encompassed within new focus on **economic mobility** and **place-based community asset-building**, with a particular focus on **affordable housing**
- Increased focus on **leadership development** and **capital project planning support** for leaders and communities of color, and others needing early-stage support
- Increased percentage of Foundation assets dedicated toward **impact investments**





23%

EQUITABLE EDUCATION

- Innovative Learning Environments
- Innovations in School Systems
- Conditions for Sustained Innovation



23%

NATURAL RESOURCES

- Balanced Water Management
- Forest Health & Watershed Restoration
- Landscape Conservation & Land Trust Capacity



12%

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- Economic Mobility for Individuals and Families
- Equitable Community Assets



5%

INFORMED COMMUNITIES

- Stronger Civic News Ecosystem
- Coverage in Gates' Core Focus Areas
- Inclusive News Leadership, Voices & Models



37%

CAPITAL GRANTS

- Amplify Needs and Goals for Capital Projects
- Leadership and Capital Planning Support for Diverse Leaders



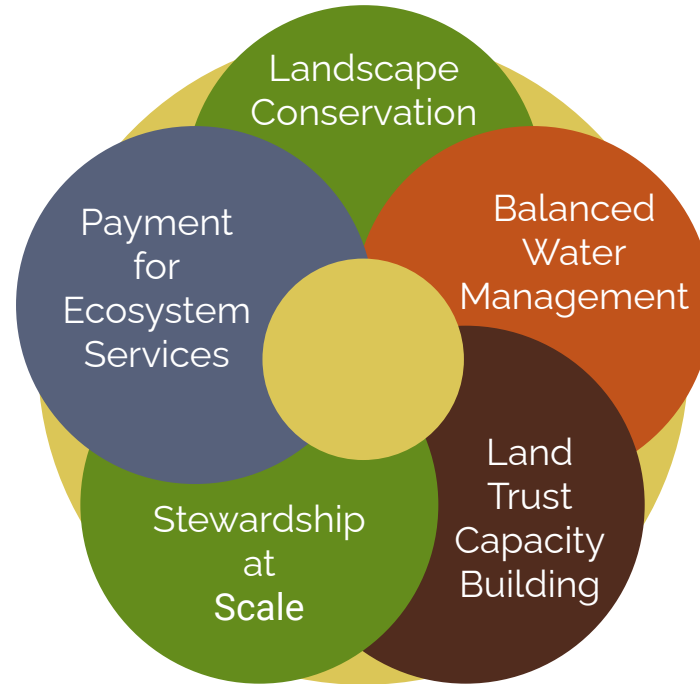
Natural Resources

GOAL

Long-term sustainability and resilience of Colorado's land and water resources through balanced management, collaboration, and innovation, and good decision-making in the face of unprecedented challenges including climate change, population growth, and urbanization.



Looking Back: 2017-2021 Strategic Plan Natural Resources Focus Areas



Natural Resources Lookback: What We Learned

- Our ability to leverage our grant dollars to multiply and expand funding for our partners is a unique asset
- When we provide seed funding, we can be a catalyst
- We value listening and know it can lead to outcomes
- We established a baseline from which there is tremendous potential to build upon DEI work
- We know that collaborative conservation and community engagement can meet multiple objectives that achieve results



Natural Resources: Where We Are

Challenges

Population growth drives the urban-rural. Colorado's population rose by 14.8 percent over the past decade (Census 2020)

Drought and steadily declining flows in the Colorado River and across Colorado's rivers and streams.

In 2020, more than 625,000 acres burned across the state

The leadership of Colorado's outdoor and natural resources businesses, recreation, conservation organizations are not reflective of its population.

Opportunities

Infrastructure and Investment and Jobs Act

A lot of momentum addressing DEI in natural resources work

Forest health a high priority for many across Colorado.

Urgency of water shortages require new forms of innovation and collaboration



Natural Resources: What We Heard

- Convene more!
- Invest in leadership development, resilience and adaptation strategies - particularly in underserved communities
- The lack of consistent and adequate operational capacity support is stifling the work of many place-based organizations
- Collaboration and partnerships are critical to addressing what are viewed as common large-scale challenges
- Climate change and its implications on forest health, water, conservation present an opportunity for new solutions.



What's New?

What stays the same?

- Strong focus and support for rural areas
- Continued prioritization of: water management, land conservation, and land trust community
- Focus on addressing climate impacts as an overarching objective

What's new?

- Consolidation of five original sub-strategies into three
- Elevated focus on forest health and watershed restoration
- Intentional focus on increasing diversity, equity and inclusion in the sector



Natural Resources: Priority Strategies for 2022-2026

Balanced Water Management

Advance water solutions that acknowledge and address the complexities of a scarce resource and its impact on the environment, communities, and economies

Forest Health and Watershed Restoration

Create inclusive and collaborative forest management strategies that support the role of healthy forests and watersheds in providing ecological, social, and economic benefits

Landscape Conservation and Land Trust Capacity-Building

Support targeted land protection and resilience investments in high-priority landscapes and support the land trust community in large-scale and collaborative statewide efforts

BALANCED WATER MANAGEMENT

Closely tied to Colorado's multi-stakeholder, statewide water plan.

Gates' support might look like:

- Advancing proven models of water sharing agreements
- Forging agreements among stakeholders on water demand management priorities, strategies, and policies
- Protecting the interests of water rights holders that voluntarily participate in reduced consumptive use programs
- Programs that maximize water savings and economic impact



FOREST HEALTH & WATERSHED RESTORATION

Gates' support might look like:

- Replication of successful forest management strategies
- Support for regional initiatives to bring more public dollars to improve forest health and watershed restoration
- Cross-jurisdictional efforts to mitigate catastrophic wildfires



LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION & LAND TRUST CAPACITY BUILDING

Gates' support might look like:

- Regional approach to large-scale landscape conservation in SE Colorado and the San Luis Valley
- Support for projects that integrate economic growth, rural resilience and land stewardship
- Support for coalitions like Keep It Colorado, working to advance the land trust field through policy, collaboration, and sector sustainability
- Staff leadership to convene funders on advancing DEI in natural resources and climate change work



Natural Resources: Application Process for Strategic Grants

Outreach to Program Officer (Whitney Johnson)

- Program officers are eager to hear about evolving opportunities
- Send an email
- Submit an inquiry via online form
- Call to introduce your organization or talk through your idea

Define the Project & Submit Application

- Back and forth process; may take 2-6 months
- Define learning questions, goals, project milestones, impact indicators
- Rolling deadlines (Feb., April, July, Oct.); time-sensitive proposals may be fast-tracked

Gates Board Decision & Grant Agreement

- Decisions at meetings in April, June, September, December
- Notification, grant contracts signed, funds released
- Ongoing communication w/program officer
- Interim and final reports

Capital Grants for Natural Resources

We invest in capital projects because we believe that land and facilities are long-term assets that can help nonprofit and community organizations serve Colorado communities.

We support capital projects that:

- protect and steward land and water resources, habitat, and the health of natural systems
- preserve the state's agricultural legacy
- construct and improve parks, trail systems, and open space for public recreation and access
- provide environmental education and leadership opportunities for young people

Funding examples:

- land conservation and easement purchases
- open spaces, greenways and trail systems
- urban public spaces and community gardens



Capital Grants for Natural Resources

Outreach to Program Officers (Whitney Johnson or Lisa Rucker)

- Send an email
- Submit an inquiry via online form
- Call to talk through your idea

Submit Application

- Use the Colorado Capital Common Grant Application
- Proposal deadlines: **March 15** and **September 15**
- See full at details at: www.gatesfamilyfoundation.org/how-to-apply

Gates Board Decision & Grant Agreement

- Decisions at meetings in June and December
- Notification, grant contracts signed, funds released
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Impact Investments for Natural Resources

Program-Related Investments

Specific to Colorado; align with strategic priorities; below-market commitments of capital (loans/ guarantees); need a clear source of repayment – ex: farmland acquisition fund in SE Colorado

Mission-Related Investments

Investments within the Foundation's portfolio; market-rate returns; investing in innovation in the sector – ex: impact funds focused on ranch and forest conservation, mitigation of industrial impacts

Process: PRIs often initiated through contact with program staff – contact Whitney
MRIs are part of the investment management process – contact Tom or Sue



Questions From The Community

- ❖ Are you considering supporting forest restoration projects?
- ❖ Do you work through a process to select the type of natural resource issues you want to fund? Does this change over the years?
- ❖ Do you encourage collaborations among grantees?
- ❖ Where and how do you expect to invest in organizational capacity, in addition to specific projects?
- ❖ How is Gates investing in the preservation of Natural Resources as a means of sustainable economic opportunities?

Please view the last 15-20 minutes of the video for answers!



What's Next?

Open Opportunities

- We're searching for a new **Program Officer for Natural Resources**.
- Public officials can apply by **March 4** for a **Gates Fellowship** to attend Harvard this summer.
- Our next deadline to **apply for a capital grant** is **March 15**.



What's Next? Learn More

NEXT WEBINARS:

- [Informed Communities \(March 3, Noon to 1 p.m. MT\)](#)
- [Impact Investments \(March 14, Noon to 1 p.m. MT\)](#)

NATURAL RESOURCES QUESTIONS/INQUIRIES

Whitney Johnson, Senior Program Officer

wjohnson@gatesfamilyfoundation.org



Thank You

Let's keep the conversation going.

With your partnership, we amplify our impact.