



A STRATEGIC PLAN FOR

**“Progressive Succession and Excellence, Integrated Inclusion
and Long-Term Vision and Sustainability”**

(Being 25% More Awesome)

2021-2025

Adopted by RMYC Board Directors and Staff Members
May 2021

BACKGROUND

Rocky Mountain Youth Corps (RMYC) is a 501(c)3 non-profit established in 1993 and headquartered in Steamboat Springs, Colorado.

The mission: Rocky Mountain Youth Corps engages young people in the outdoors, inspiring them to use their strengths and potential to lead healthy, productive lives. We teach responsibility for self, community and environment through teamwork, service and experiential education.

The vision: Rocky Mountain Youth Corps will be the leader in NW Colorado to provide diverse opportunities for young people to participate in outdoor based service and education for their growth, respect and responsibility to self, community and environment. We will do this through strong sustainable collaborations with project, program and funding partners and the creation of a youth development center.

The organizational goals:

- Provide opportunities for young people to personally connect to the outdoors.
- Provide life skills training through a healthy lifestyles model.
- Offer opportunities for academic success in young people.
- Provide enhanced employment opportunities through job skills development.
- Engage young people in meaningful conservation and service projects.
- Forge partnerships with land management agencies, local community services, individuals and non-profit organizations.
- Promote a sense of belonging to communities and environments.
- Employ a diverse mix of ethnic, economic, and social backgrounds to reflect our service community.
- Promote civic and social responsibility.

RMYC operates four programs:

Conservation Corps, Youth Corps, Natural Resource Internships, and Yampa Valley Science School.

Youth Corps and Conservation Corps engage youth and young adults in the outdoors by putting them on crews of around 10, with 2 adult leaders to perform community and environmental service projects, mainly on public lands. Projects include trails, forest management, historic preservation, and parks and campground maintenance. They live and work together for extended time periods in the summer.

We serve ages 11-25 years. Youth ages 11-13 are volunteers, and they work closer to home. Youth ages 14 and up are paid a wage, and youth/young adults over 17 can earn an AmeriCorps Education Award (voucher) for higher education in addition to their payroll. Young adults crew members live and work outdoors 24/7 for a minimum of 10 weeks, and up to 20 weeks.

We have a required education program. Ultimately, we are preparing youth for a healthy, productive adulthood by teaching independent living skills, job skills, and healthy lifestyle behaviors. We are a no-tolerance, drug free program. RMYC is the largest employer of youth in northwest Colorado.

Our Natural Resource Internship Program engages young adults in conservation career positions within public land management agencies such as the Bureau of Land Management; US Forest Service; National, State, and local Parks, and more. Many of these interns go on to pursue lifelong careers in natural resource management.

Finally, our Yampa Valley Science School program brings every 6th grader from Routt County to a remote camp each fall, during school, for 5 days and three nights to learn about their science curriculum through hands-on, experiential lesson activities. The students leave with greater excitement for learning about science, and more prepared for school.

INTRODUCTION to RMYC's STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

John M Bryson, in his text on Strategic Planning defines strategic planning as a “disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization is, what it does, and why it does it. At its best, strategic planning requires broad scale information gathering, an exploration of alternatives, and an emphasis on the future implications of present decisions. It can facilitate communication and participation, accommodate divergent interests and values, and foster orderly decision making and successful implementation”. The strategic plan is designed as an active, living, dynamic document that is the Board’s primary tool for determining whether the goals for their trusteeship are being met. The process must have the extensive involvement and leadership of the Board, CEO, staff, community, partners, clients, and other stakeholders of the organization.

RMYC'S STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

RMYC engaged the consulting services of the Colorado Institute for Excellence with Ellen Kendall and Heather Martyn. The consultants worked with the Strategic Planning committee: Avrom Feinberg, Board Vice-Chair; Darcy Owens-Trask, Board Member; Mary Ann Duffey, Alumni Board Member; Gretchen Van De Carr, CEO; Mark Wertheimer, COO; Chrissy Lynch, CFO; and Ryan Banks, Program Director.

The process involved two primary data gathering steps:

1. **Internal Stakeholder Analysis** – The process begins with an internal assessment of the efficacy of the organization by board and staff to determine key topics to be addressed. The Affinity Diagram and Priority Matrix approaches were used to gather detailed feedback. CIE interviewed all 13 current staff members, 3 alumni staff members, 8 of 13 current board members, and 1 alumni board member. The results were compiled by the consultant in order to maintain confidentiality.
2. **External Stakeholder Analysis** – Feedback from external stakeholders was gathered through personal interviews between these stakeholders and RMYC board of directors and staff. This feedback included advice and resources that was integrated into the working plan. Interviewees included 61 stakeholders, many of whom represented multiple areas: 33 funders/donors; 16 project partners; 14 program partners; 12 parents; 10 alumni staff/participants; 10 community leaders; 8 alumni board members; and 5 corps associates.

The following **Strategic Initiatives** and **Operational Improvements** serve to increase the overall organizational quality of services and functions.

Strategic Initiatives are directives that move the organization towards its vision and address topics that are relevant to the organization as a whole. The four Strategic Initiatives are primarily led by the board.

1. **VISION:** Clarify the long-term vision, mission, goals and core values of the organization;
2. **SUCCESSION:** Refine the staff succession plan;
3. **FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY:** Strengthen long-term financial sustainability through diversified funding and increased endowment and planned giving; and
4. **DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION:** Enhance diversity, equity and inclusion across the organization.

Operational Improvements are more internally focused topics that make the organization more effective and efficient. The three Operational Improvements are primarily led by the staff.

1. Improve and systemize **overarching organizational and administrative** processes;
2. Improve and systemize **critical program** processes;
3. Improve and systemize the **senior staff excellence** plan.

Details of each **Strategic Initiative** and **Operational Improvement** are described below.

**Strategic Initiative #1:
Clarify Long-term Vision, Mission, Goals and Core Values**

Committee: Board Member Leader: Paige Baker

Members: Board: Margi Briggs-Casson, Loretta McElhiney, Jenny Carey, Deb Proper

Staff: Mark Wertheimer, Ryan Banks

Description: This initiative seeks to review and refine the current organizational core values, mission, and goals and to re-establish the long-term vision.

Summary: A clear vision is essential to unify, inspire, and engage stakeholders and provides a focal point for goal-setting and planning. Core values strengthen the organization's culture, improves team dynamics, and creates belonging and commitment.

1 Year Target: Review and refine the current organizational core values, vision, mission, and goals and to re-establish the long-term vision by June 1, 2022.

Three Year Goal: Create a systemized process for reviewing and revising the organizational vision, mission, and goals on a regular basis with both board and staff input.

**Strategic Initiative #2:
Refine the Succession Plan**

Committee: Board Member Leader: Paul Sachs

Members: Board: Frank Mayer, Jenny Carey. **Staff:** Gretchen Van De Carr, Ryan Banks

Description: This initiative seeks to ensure a smooth transition as the organization prepares for changes in CEO leadership and other key positions for the next 5 years.

Summary: Understanding and planning for staff change is essential to the long-term strategic success of Rocky Mountain Youth Corps. A Succession Plan for key positions was developed in November 2019. The founding CEO (since 1993) is planning to transition sometime in 2024 and the current succession plan has not been detailed. The plan will be reviewed and refined with a clear timeline of activities to be completed in the next 1-3 years to include transition processes for all key leadership positions at the organization that may occur, whether planned or unforeseen.

One Year Targets:

- ❖ Action plan with timeline and associated expenses for CEO transition;
- ❖ Draft succession plan for all key staff.

Three Year Goal:

By December 31, 2024, a new CEO will be in place after a smooth transition from current CEO; there will be a detailed Key Staff Succession Plan detailing all necessary information and processes in place; The leadership structure of the organization will be clarified.

**Strategic Initiative #3:
Strengthen Long-Term Sustainability through
Diversified Funding and Increased Endowment and Planned Giving**

Committee: Board Member Leader: Avrom Feinberg

Members: Board: Greg Henion, Scott Wither, Adam Alspach

Staff: Gretchen Van De Carr, Kate Warnke, Chrissy Lynch, Mark Wertheimer

Description: This initiative seeks to continue exploring diverse funding opportunities including endowment building and planned giving.

Summary: RMYC has developed strategies and goals for maintaining a healthy and diversified financial condition. However, long-term sustainability needs to be enhanced through continued exploration of diversified funding opportunities. In our goal to become more financially sustainable, we have identified planned giving and endowment building as areas for securing long-term sustainability.

One Year Targets:

- ❖ Determine an appropriate goal for the endowment;
- ❖ Determine the amount or percentage of the endowment that will include planned giving;
- ❖ Determine desirable breakdown of various annual revenue sources.

Three Year Goal:

Increase RMYC endowment to an amount that will provide a specified annual income to cover certain expenses, such as overhead, property maintenance, and other expenses TBD.

**Strategic Initiative #4:
Enhance Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Across all Areas of the Organization**

Committee: Board Member Leader: Deb Proper

Members: Board: Tim Redmond, Sherri Sweers, Suzanne Munn

Staff: Mark Wertheimer, Liz Harstein, Carlyn Lawatsch

Description: This initiative seeks to better reflect and serve the communities of the Rocky Mountain Youth Corps region.

Summary: The need for continued Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) efforts is essential in maintaining a high quality and comprehensive experience for participants, staff, board members, and partners. RMYC strives to create an organizational culture that integrates diversity, equity, and inclusion into everyday operations through enhancing the diversity of our staff, board members, and participants to accurately and fully represent our service regions; to strive for equity among our clients by identifying barriers to participation and strategizing to reduce obstacles through the provision of appropriate resources; and to enhance the sense of belonging of staff, participants, and partners from all walks of life through inclusionary efforts.

One Year Target: Create a 3-year timeline with goals and outcomes.

Three Year Goal: Integrated actions, policies, and guidelines that best reflect and serve the communities of northwest Colorado.

Operational Improvements

- 1) Improve & Systemize Overarching Organizational and Administrative Processes**
 - a) Implement data management software to manage priority functions including employee documents, projects, time tracking, and reporting
 - b) Enhance communication systems across administrative and program staff, and board members
 - c) Develop a process for assessing and managing the physical campus

- 2) Improve & Systemize Critical Program Processes**
 - a) Create decision making guidelines and processes
 - b) Systemize and detail seasonal staff recruitment and training
 - c) Articulate all levels of chain-of-command

- 3) Improve & Systemize the Senior Staff Excellence Plan**
 - a) Formalize professional development guidelines
 - b) Formalize and detail performance evaluation and compensation guidelines and resources
 - c) Develop and maintain retention strategies and goals