Environmental Education in the Gunnison Valley SWOT Analysis - March 31
Environmental Ed definition: Defining broadly to include all audiences, orgs, educators

Strengths
What assets, resources, programs, people, or practices do we already have that we can build on—individually or collectively?
- Location and accessibility to open space that includes diverse ecosystems, and locations managed by diverse organizations (USFS, BLM, NPS, CBLT, etc.)
- Abundance of public land and recreation opportunities
- Open space and ranches, agricultural community engaged with land stewardship
- Dispersed built spaces for education (Mountain Roots gardens, Nordic Center, school district spaces)
- Partners have good relationships with the schools, new outdoor education staff member being hired at Pathways
- Well-educated, resourceful, passionate community
- Existing env. Focused groups (Western, RMBL. UGRWCD, NPS, etc.)
- Collaboration, strong sense of community, cross-sector and cross-disciplinary work is already happening.
- Community and local government that prioritize environment and education
- UGRWCD - funding for collaboration/partnerships, projects
- Common motivation for EE
- High quality tiers of education with a captive audience
- Local newspaper- connection, communication
- Existing project curricula and programming- don't always have to reinvent the wheel
- Engaged community - lots of adult engagement with Wet Meadows project, community trail days, etc.
- High population of young folks, possible EE staff, with the draws of WCU and Mt CB

Weaknesses
What gaps, challenges, or limitations exist in our current work or in how we coordinate across programs?
- Funding - competition for limited resources
- Lack of coordinated effort, lack of capacity for strategy, planning and time for collaboration
- Time - can't "pour" until your own cup is full
- Politics
- Travel, transportation, geography, rural
- Difficulties in connecting & communicating w/ school leaders and teachers, teachers have limited capacity to do more than what they are already doing
- Turnover of educators and staff
- Schools are already stretched- how to gain investment, value
  - Bus driver shortage is a real challenge for field trips
- Reaching diverse communities - language barriers, building trust and relationships

- 350 days of sunshine - pressure
- Lack of professional development opportunities locally
- Isolation due to being a rural location - less connected to opportunities and being "in the know" in the Front Range
- User group needs assessment- with with instead of for

Opportunities

What possibilities do we see for collaboration, funding, innovation, or impact if we align our efforts?

- Support from regional and state ee networks
- Pathways are there- how to connect
- Cross-pollination w/ more facetime and more experiential sharing
- Model to look at: Office of Information Techologies (OIT) pathway, Western Slope Schools Career Collaborative (WSSCC)- how can these pathways for HS and college lead to internships, practical experience
- Workforce development and creating pipelines - tap AmeriCorps, eeCorps, etc.
- UGRWCD - resources for funding, marketing
- Being in the headwaters - more watershed education
- Dark sky communities- tie universal efforts together
- Collaboration for fundraising efforts and grant applications
- Populations in need- how to be culturally and linguistically diverse
- Increased funding at state level
- More annual events = more engagement
- Multi-disciplinary, combined expertise
- Keeping current, staying informed - create central resource & access, advertise each others events - create a common calendar ? create a newsletter?
- Citizen science
- Build upon existing outdoor rec/stewardship events and infuse environmental ed
- Agrotourism is gaining popularity
- Share data about community needs and assessment
- Engage with the homeschool population

Threats

What external challenges, risks, or barriers could limit our success—now or in the future?

- Lack of collective capacity/funding threatens sustainability of the collective
- Current political climate & administration, lack of federal funding, state budget shortfalls. Current uncertainty makes it difficult to plan.
- Reduction in federal workforce - folks leaving workforce now could leave gaps in future administrations and agencies. Environmental career opportunities in threat, how to prepare students?
- Threats to education

- Climate change
- Competing urgent needs in the community : Housing crisis, food insecurity, etc.
- Increased isolation
- Privatization
- Risk management
- Development
- Deaf ears - apathy, how do you make people care?
- Perceived competition
- Staff recruitment and retention
- Fatigue
- Threats on public lands, privatization of public lands (ie. ultrawealthy buying up land and keeping people out)
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