

Implementation Project Ranking and Top Five Project Profiles

Montezuma County Outdoor Recreation

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Outdoor Recreation Implementation Projects Ranking and Top Five Project Profiles

This scoring matrix rates the provisional list of implementation projects for the purpose of identifying the most viable and valuable projects for which implementation plans will be developed. The following criteria were scored 1 (low) to 5 (high):

- Market demand – The level of demand for the project arising from end users including visitors and local residents.
- Ready assets – This rating shows how well-suited physical assets are today for the project idea.
- Economic impact – This ranks the amount of jobs and economic output that would result from the project
- Local capacity – This rating shows the degree to which the project could be implemented by the local community
- Regulatory barriers – This rates the flexibility of regulations covering the implementation project

	Market Demand	Ready Assets	Economic Impact	Local Capacity	Regulatory Barriers	Total
Upper Dolores boating access	3	3	3	3	3	15
Year-round outdoor recreation infrastructure work crew	2	3	2	3	4	14
Connect towns to trails systems	5	3	5	3	2	18
Outdoor recreation and heritage tourism marketing program focused on CANM	4	5	5	4	5	23
Convenient access to McPhee Reservoir for SUPs, kayaks, hand launched craft	5	5	5	5	4	24
Transportation for disadvantaged youth	1	1	1	2	2	7
Access road and parking improvements	3	5	2	2	4	16
Retail/shopping entrepreneurship platform	5	4	5	4	4	22
Trails for E-bikes	3	2	3	2	3	13
New trails to keep up with growth	4	2	3	4	2	15
Trail signage	2	5	1	4	3	15
Bike packing routes	2	4	2	4	2	14
Maps and descriptions of outdoor recreation and heritage assets in the county	4	5	4	5	5	23
Outdoor recreation events	4	4	4	4	3	19
Promote the wilderness study areas (WSAs)	2	5	1	2	5	15
Gain public access to landlocked public lands	4	1	2	4	4	15
Short-duration, easy, developed pathway to a heritage site	5	3	5	4	3	20

The top five highest scoring implementation project ideas are each described in a business model template:

- Retail/shopping entrepreneurship platform, 22 points
- Convenient access to McPhee Reservoir for SUPs, kayaks, hand launched craft, 24 points
- Short-duration, easy, developed pathway to a heritage site, 20 points
- Outdoor recreation and heritage tourism marketing program focused on CANM, 23 points
- Maps and descriptions of outdoor recreation and heritage assets in the county, 23 points



Project	Retail/shopping entrepreneurship platform
Value Proposition	Diversify the retail shopping market and fill market gaps with local, independently-owned businesses to facilitate the launch of new or early-stage retail businesses.
Key Services	Business development Physical retail sales space Online marketplace/website for marketing and web sales Training
Market Potential	According to Colorado Tourism Office, 47% of overnight outdoor recreation visitors shop for souvenirs, 26% shop at boutiques and 15% go antiquing, and they spend \$63 per person per trip on leisure shopping. According to the Montezuma County Outdoor Recreation Intercept Survey, 23% of overnight outdoor recreation visitors bought gifts or souvenirs, spending an average of \$15 per person per trip on leisure shopping. The lower participation and spending amounts in Montezuma County compared to the state as a whole signal potential for additional retail/shopping sales to outdoor recreation visitors.
Assets	Outdoor recreation and heritage attractions Historic downtowns in Dolores, Mancos and Cortez Commercial highway corridors in Dolores, Mancos and Cortez Lodging establishments, campgrounds, restaurants and other visitor services infrastructure
Key Partners	Mesa Verde Country Southwest Colorado Small Business Development Center (SBDC) Region 9 City of Cortez, Town of Dolores, Town of Mancos Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade Colorado Department of Local Affairs Economic Development Administration
Policies and Regulations	Downtown zoning and highway corridor zoning in Cortez and Mancos allow retail without a public hearing. A public hearing is required for retail downtown in Dolores is not required for retail along the Highway 145 corridor.
Economic Impact	Montezuma Count outdoor recreation visitors buy \$4.5 million of gifts, souvenirs per year with a total economic output, including multipliers, of \$6.2 million and 56 jobs. As noted above, this retail category has growth potential.



Project	Convenient, centralized access to McPhee Reservoir for SUPs, kayaks and other hand launched craft.
Value Proposition	Reservoir-based paddle sports are accessible to most people and continue to grow in popularity. The reservoir is directly adjacent to the Town of Dolores and expanded/improved access from the west side of town would attract visitors and augment quality of life for locals.
Market Potential	There are an estimated 29,000 annual paddle sports uses on reservoirs in Montezuma County and on the Dolores River above McPhee Reservoir. Nationally, recreational kayaking participation grew every year between 2014-2021, and standup paddle boarding participation grew every year between 2010-2021. In the southwest region of the state, canoeing and kayaking has a 9.4% participation rate and stand-up paddle boarding has a 13.3% participation rate.
Assets	Land along McPhee Reservoir on west end of Dolores is all owned by public entities: Town of Dolores, USFS, Dolores Cemetery Association. Central Avenue (Town of Dolores), Lost Canyon Road (Montezuma County), Big Bend/County Road 28 (Montezuma County)
Key Partners	Town of Dolores USFS Bureau of Reclamation Dolores Cemetery Association GOCO Dolores River Boating Advocates
Policies and Regulations	The San Juan National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan's Desired Condition 3.2.6 states: "A strong connection exists between the reservoir and the town of Dolores". According the 2023 Motor Vehicle Use Map, USFS Roads 502 (Town of Dolores west end), 300 (The Beach) and 515 (Big Bend) all access McPhee Reservoir in the vicinity of Town of Dolores and all are designated as "roads open to all vehicles".
Economic Impact	Paddle sports occurring on McPhee Reservoir, on the other water bodies in the county, and on the Dolores River above McPhee Reservoir account for 29,150 uses annually, attract 3,670 visitor parties and generate over \$2 million in visitor spending per year. Enhancing easy access to McPhee Reservoir for hand launched craft would attract more visitors and further boost sales.



Project	Short-duration, easy, developed pathway to a heritage site.
Value Proposition	Low-effort, easy-to-find hikes leading to tangible attractions will lend to a quality visitor experience that can be shared with friends and family on social media.
Market Potential	Nationally, participation in hiking grew every year between 2010–2021. For visitors statewide, hiking (23% participation rate among visitors) and sightseeing (18% participation rate among visitors) are among the most popular leisure activities. The popularity of these activities manifests high levels of visitation to low-effort, easy-to-find hiking pathways leading to heritage attractions. The Escalante Trail is a 1/2 mile paved pathway leading from the Canyons of the Ancients Visitors Center parking lot to the Escalante Pueblo. This pathway sees over 14,000 uses per year. An aggregate surface pathway at Lowry Pueblo registers over 12,000 uses annually. Additional pathways leading to heritage attractions in highly accessible locations would lead to similar levels of use.
Assets	San Juan Skyway Scenic Byway and Trail of the Ancients Scenic Byway Archeological sites in vehicle accessible areas. "Old West" heritage sites throughout Montezuma County
Key Partners	Town of Dolores, City of Cortez, Town of Mancos USFS BLM/Canyons of the Ancients National Monument Montezuma County Heritage Museum Cortez Cultural Center Ute Mountain Ute Indian Tribe Fort Lewis College Center for Southwest Studies
Policies and Regulations	Any development near heritage sites or public information about them must comply with federal regulations and policies protecting heritage assets.
Economic Impact	Heritage assets in Montezuma County attract hundreds of thousands of visitors every year and bring tens of millions of dollars into the local economy. Mesa Verde National Park sees about ½ million uses and generates nearly \$29 million in sales in Montezuma County. BLM roads and trails and the Canyons of the Ancients National Monument Visitor Center see about 106,000 uses and bring in \$12 million in visitor spending.



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Project	Outdoor recreation and heritage marketing program focused on Canyons of the Ancients National Monument (CANM)
Value Proposition	The overarching function of the outdoor recreation and heritage tourism marketing program is to encapsulate the diverse offerings of CANM and make it attractive, accessible and easily understood with a well-designed marketing platform and outreach strategy.
Services Offered	Marketing for easily understood and accessible outdoor recreation and heritage tourism opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Packages and itineraries • Maps, guides and beta • Tailored business directory
Market Potential	The interest in archeological sites is evident in the 30k in attendance during a typical year at the CANM Visitor Center, over 12k uses at Lowry Pueblo and nearly ½ million uses at Mesa Verde. Excluding Sand Canyon, Lowry Pueblo, and the CANM Visitor Center, estimates show fewer than 10k uses per year throughout most of CANM. Large areas could accommodate more use and certain segments of the heritage tourism market will be drawn toward CANM.
Assets	CANM Visitor Center Sand Canyon Pueblo, Painted Hand Pueblo and Lowry Pueblo and other reasonably accessible attractions. Drive touring loops and through routes Dispersed camping Warm fall and spring weather National Monument user information and websites
Key Partners	BLM/CANM/Visitor Center Staff Ute Mountain Ute Indian Tribe Mesa Verde Country Colorado Tourism Office Town of Dolores, City of Cortez, Town of Mancos Cortez Cultural Center
Policies and Regulations	Any development near heritage sites or public information about them must comply with federal regulations and policies protecting heritage assets.
Economic Impact	More visitation to CANM will bring more sales and activity into the county. Heritage assets in Montezuma County already attract hundreds of thousands of visitors every year and bring tens of millions of dollars into the local economy. Mesa Verde National Park sees about ½ million uses and generates nearly \$29 million in sales in Montezuma County. BLM roads and trails and the Canyons of the Ancients National Monument Visitor Center see about 106,000 uses and bring in \$12 million in visitor spending.



Project	Maps and descriptions of Montezuma County outdoor recreation and heritage assets regularly updated and posted on a centralized visitor website.
Value Proposition	A suite of maps and descriptions of recreation and heritage assets in Montezuma County would help visitors find the right activities for their group. Quality mapping and descriptions online will encourage prospective visitors to book a trip.
Market Potential	There are over fifty distinct outdoor recreation and heritage attractions and/or facilities in the county and hundreds of miles of trails and recreation roads. There are nearly $\frac{3}{4}$ million annual uses of Montezuma County outdoor recreation assets. A well-designed and updated map would be used and appreciated by visitors.
Assets	Montezuma County GIS database USFS and BLM GIS databases Big Loop Maps Mesa Verde Country website
Key Partners	Montezuma County BLM/CANM/Visitor Center Staff Mesa Verde Country Colorado Tourism Office
Policies and Regulations	The geographic data that would be used to make the maps is public information and would be available for maps, including maps for sale.
Economic Impact	Quality maps and descriptions will encourage prospective visitors to book a trip to Montezuma County. For visitors who are already here, maps and descriptions will prompt them to consider staying for another day. Both of these outcomes would increase visitor sales.

