

Dear Reader / Reviewer:

One goal of this project was to continue to build on the ‘lessons learned’ that were shared with us as this Playbook was compiled and pay them forward. If all or some portion of the work detailed herein can be of use to your organization or community, please request permission to use it. We will be tracking activity around the use of the Playbook outside our locale to help create a feedback loop and share updates as they arise.

Please email [halie.cunningham@routtwildfire.org](mailto:halie.cunningham@routtwildfire.org) to request permission to use any portion of the Playbook.

Thank you for looking and providing any feedback.

## **A. Executive Summary**

The Routt County Long-Term Wildfire Recovery Playbook (“Playbook”) results from a collaborative effort between The Routt County Wildfire Council (RCWMC) and many other local and regional stakeholder groups. The stakeholder organizations involved in the development of this Playbook in an advisory capacity are listed in the Acknowledgements (section B). Input from these stakeholders shaped this plan, along with extensive research and interviews with other key stakeholders not serving in an advisory role. The final draft of this long-term recovery Playbook incorporates suggestions from Routt County stakeholders who participated in a public comment process separate from the advisory stakeholders. This Playbook meets Routt County’s disaster recovery objectives which can be viewed below, and meets recommendations emphasized in the [Community Wildfire Protection Plan \(CWPP\)](#), published in 2023.

This Playbook establishes a series of considerations and a vision for **long-term recovery** operations following a wildfire which destroys life and/or property and upheaves Routt County communities. As a result of extensive research, stakeholder engagement, and interviews with experts, this Playbook identifies local and regional organizations as lead agencies in long-term recovery, and provides recommendations for roles, responsibilities, and operations in the event of a wildfire disaster. There are both pre and post-disaster recommendations for long-term wildfire recovery in this Playbook. It is intended to be used as a complement to the County’s formalized operational procedures, plans, and protocols. It is important that long-term wildfire recovery procedures, plans, and protocols are coordinated between agencies, both within and outside of County and municipal governments, to avoid any counterproductive or duplicated actions. The Routt County Office of Emergency Management’s all-hazards Recovery Plan aims to achieve the following key tasks, and

this specific long-term wildfire recovery Playbook will strive to meet these objectives in parallel to the County's all-hazards Recovery Plan.

- ★ Promotes cooperation and coordination among federal, state, and local officials.
- ★ Incorporates all elements of the community as part of the recovery process.
- ★ Facilitates the incorporation of hazard mitigation projects as part of the recovery process.
- ★ Provides the opportunity for residents to join together and function as a community and be involved in defining and creating their future.

This wildfire recovery Playbook's relationship to other formalized operation plans can be found in Section D.4. of this document.

Users of this document are encouraged to provide feedback and recommendations that will improve its clarity and ease of use.

*Questions or feedback regarding this document should be directed to:*

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## **B. Acknowledgements**

Below is a list of all the representatives who provided valuable expertise which shaped and informed this Playbook.

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**Dr. Susan Washko**, Professor and Advisor, Western Colorado University  
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## **C. Common Acronyms and Phrases**

BLM - Bureau of Land Management

"Blue Sky Times" - When a disaster is not occurring, threatening to occur, or has recently happened.

CAP - Climate Action Plan  
CBOs - Community-Based Organizations  
CDPHE - Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment  
CDPS - Colorado Department of Public Safety  
CMC - Colorado Mountain College  
COOP - Continuity of Operations Plan  
CRO - Colorado Resiliency Office  
CSFS - Colorado State Forest Service  
CWCB - Colorado Water Conservation Board  
CWPP - Community Wildfire Protection Plan  
DAC - Disaster Assistance Center  
DAT - Damage Assessment Team  
DFPC - Division of Fire Prevention & Control  
DHSEM - Colorado Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management  
DOLA - Colorado Department of Local Affairs  
EOC - Emergency Operations Center  
EOP - Emergency Operations Plan  
EPA - Environmental Protection Agency  
ESFs - Emergency Support Functions  
FSA - Farm Service Agency  
GNA - Good Neighbor Authority  
HMP - Hazard Mitigation Plan  
HoC - Headwaters of the Colorado  
IA - Individual Assistance (FEMA)  
FEMA - Federal Emergency Management Administration  
LTRG - Long-Term Recovery Group  
LTR - Long-Term Recovery  
MAC - Multi-Agency Coordination  
NEA - National Endowment for the Arts  
NDRF - National Disaster Recovery Framework  
NFF - National Forest Foundation  
NRCS - Natural Resource Conservation Service  
NVOAD - National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster  
OEM - Office of Emergency Management (Routt County)  
PA - Public Assistance (FEMA)  
RCCD - Routt County Conservation District  
RCWMC - Routt County Wildfire Mitigation Council  
REPS - Reaching Everyone Preventing Suicide  
RMIIA - Rocky Mountain Insurance Information Association  
RMYC - Rocky Mountain Youth Corps  
RSFs - Recovery Support Functions

RWGs - Recovery Working Groups  
SBA - Small Business Administration  
STTL - State, Tribal, Territorial, and Local Governments  
TDS - Temporary Debris Storage  
USACE - U.S. Army Corp of Engineers  
USFS - U.S. Forest Service  
USGS - U.S. Geological Survey  
UYWCD - Upper Yampa Water Conservancy District  
UWYV - United Way of the Yampa Valley  
WAPA - Western Area Power Administration  
WRAP - Wildfire Ready Action Plan  
WUI - Wildland Urban Interface  
YVCF - Yampa Valley Community Foundation  
YVHA - Yampa Valley Housing Authority  
YVSC - Yampa Valley Sustainability Council  
YVWC - Yampa Valley Well-Being Consortium  
YWGBRT - Yampa-White-Green Basin Roundtable

## **D. Introduction**

### **D.1. Purpose and Scope**

The purpose of this long-term wildfire recovery Playbook is to...

- (1) identify local stakeholder groups whose current responsibilities within the community prime them to be a part of a Long-Term (wildfire) Recovery Group (LTRG).
- (2) identify actions and resources the LTRG can catalyze pre-disaster so Routt County can be better prepared for the long-term wildfire recovery process.
- (3) establish the framework, communication pathways, roles and responsibilities which will be required for a successful, equitable long-term recovery process.
- (4) examine opportunities and provide recommendations for where Routt County communities can ***build back better***, using the ***principles of sustainable development*** as a guide in reconstruction, restoration, and healing.

The long-term wildfire recovery Playbook provides guidance for Routt County officials and staff of high-influence, community-based organizations (CBOs) in a post-wildfire scenario. These high-influence CBOs may include, for example, crisis support services, housing authorities, and land management agencies. The Playbook aims to connect human capital and resources among the various agencies within the cities, towns, special districts, and unincorporated areas of Routt County. Although, long-term recovery needs may require coordination with neighboring counties.

The scope of this recovery Playbook emphasizes the preparedness and long-term recovery phases of the disaster management cycle, not the response or short-term recovery phases, as these phases will be **ed** and managed by the Routt County Office of Emergency Management (OEM). Any recommendations for pre-wildfire recovery planning may fall into both or either the recovery and/or the preparedness phases of disaster management. See Figure D.1. to view the four main phases of the disaster management cycle.

Successful implementation and long-term sustainability of this Playbook requires the recommendations stated in this document be acted upon by the identified lead agencies (the LTRG). The Playbook, like the CWPP, is meant to be a “living document,” meaning it should evolve as crucial gaps are identified and it is tested in real-world scenarios. It is recommended that every two years, this document will be evaluated and updated by the LTRG and the County’s Office of Emergency Management.

**Figure D.1.** The Disaster Management Cycle



Typical representation of the disaster management cycle (Water Symposium of Florida, 2021)

## **D.2. Vision**

### **Vision**

*All agencies in Routt County will be aware of and prepared for their roles and responsibilities of coordinating and executing equitable short- and long-term wildfire recovery that restores the social, economic, built, and natural environments of Routt County and advances just recovery and community-led resilience.*

## **D.3. The Four Principles for Just Recovery**

**Building back better** means integrating disaster risk reduction measures into societal systems for the revitalization of livelihoods, the economy, and the environment. This framework is not just about re-building physical infrastructure. It is also concerned

with rearranging unequal power structures that impact people all the time, not only when there is a natural disaster. The following four principles were developed by CU Boulder’s Natural Hazards Center to provide guidance for **centering justice** while building back better.

**“Just recovery requires the ability to exercise agency.”** All community members—regardless of their socio-economic status, race, gender, sexual identification, land tenure, or other factors—must have the ability to fully exercise their agency and make free and informed choices that support their personal well-being. This is not possible if there is direct or indirect coercion, exclusion from public policies, or other barriers to participation. Furthermore, agency cannot be fully exercised if all options are not understood and made available in a timely manner and through accessible means.

**Just recovery begins with equality.** The principle of *prima facie* political equality, which establishes that only equality is inherently defensible—different or unequal treatment must be justified by the discriminator. Bureaucratic processes that force disaster-affected individuals or communities to prove their deservedness puts the onus to justify the need for equal treatment on the victims, and so fails this test.

**Just recovery harnesses community capacity.** Capturing the transformative and adaptive capacity of communities and honoring their definitions of resilience can reduce future risks. Holistic disaster risk reduction is not possible without acknowledging existing patterns of unequal risk distribution. It is not sufficient to mitigate against current risk when rebuilding; instead underlying social structures and patterns must be questioned. Colorblind and ahistoric recovery that does not consider context is not just.

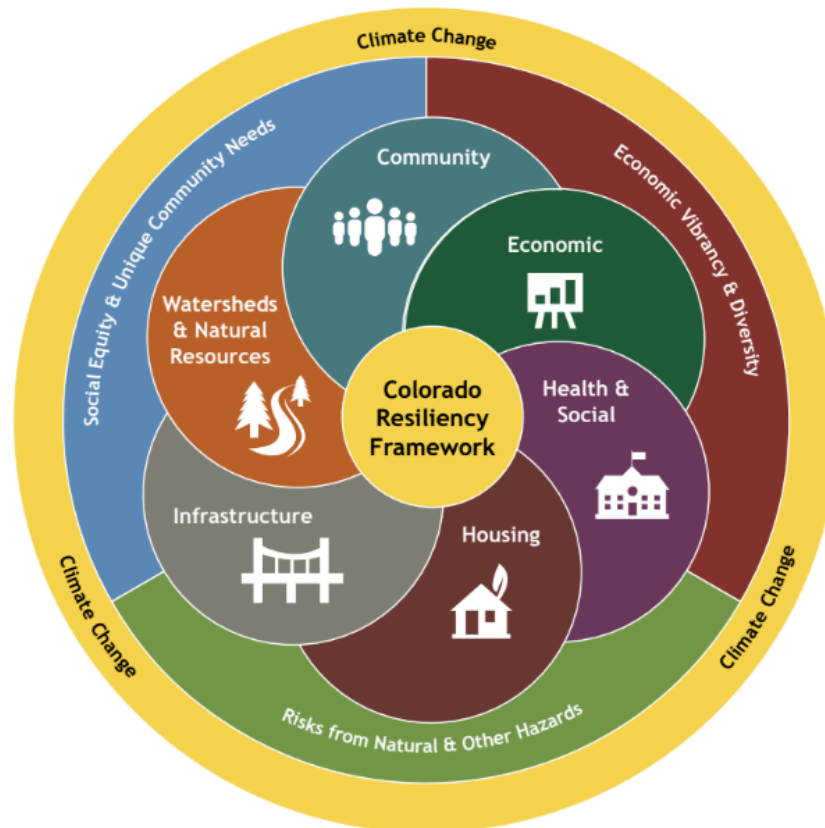
**Just recovery requires equal access.** Without equal access to resources and programs—including full participation in decision-making processes that govern resource allocation, future development, and other functions—it is not possible for communities to effectively participate in their recovery,” (Jerolleman, 2019).

#### **D.4. Colorado Resiliency Priorities**

Following the wildfires and floods of 2012 and 2013, Colorado realized planning for future disasters was a priority. This sentiment led to creating the Colorado Resiliency Framework, which was updated in 2020. This plan identifies Colorado’s goals



through the lens of risk in four main areas of interest: adapting to climate change, dealing with natural hazards, addressing social and community needs, and growing a stronger economy. There are six framework sectors, and those are further broken down into 29 strategies. Throughout this Playbook, the sectors relevant to a chapter will be referenced at the beginning of that chapter, along with resiliency strategies related to recovery recommendations included in the Playbook.



**Figure D.2.** A visual representation of the four areas of interest and six resiliency framework sectors (Colorado Resiliency Framework | Division of Local Government Colorado Resiliency Office, n.d.).

#### **D.5. Development Team and Process**

The primary development team for this Playbook consisted of local representatives from the Routt County Office of Emergency Management, Colorado State Forest Service, Yampa Valley Community Foundation, Yampa Valley Sustainability Council, Routt County Environmental Health Department, the Natural

Resource Conservation Service, United Way of the Yampa Valley, and the Routt County Wildfire Mitigation Council. This advisory group met monthly to edit and discuss the Playbook's structure and progress, and to conduct gap analysis. When requested, Lisa Ritchie of the City of Superior was considered an external consultant on this project, offering her expertise in post-Marshall Fire emergency management as a guide for this Playbook's framework. For a complete list of professionals who contributed to this document's development, see the Acknowledgements, Section B.

Conversations from these advisory meetings and interviews were used to inform the content written in this Playbook, especially information specific to Routt County. Many interviews led to further research and to interviewing other experts with experience in long-term recovery operations. Halie Cunningham, the Program Manager at RCWMC, was the researcher, main editor, and author of this Playbook. The primary advisory group assisted in proofreading and editing. A complete bibliography of all sources used to inform this Playbook are listed in References, Section O.

#### **D.6. Interaction With Existing Plans**

At the time of this writing, the Routt County Office of Emergency Management is drafting the Routt County Disaster Recovery Plan. The Disaster Recovery Plan will be utilized in conjunction with the [Routt County Emergency Operations Plan \(EOP\)](#), because the responsibilities and authorities of the EOP will carry-over into disaster recovery operations. While there are some overlaps between this Playbook and the County Disaster Recovery Plan draft, the Routt County Disaster Recovery Plan's scope is different from this long-term wildfire recovery Playbook in that the Disaster Recovery Plan:

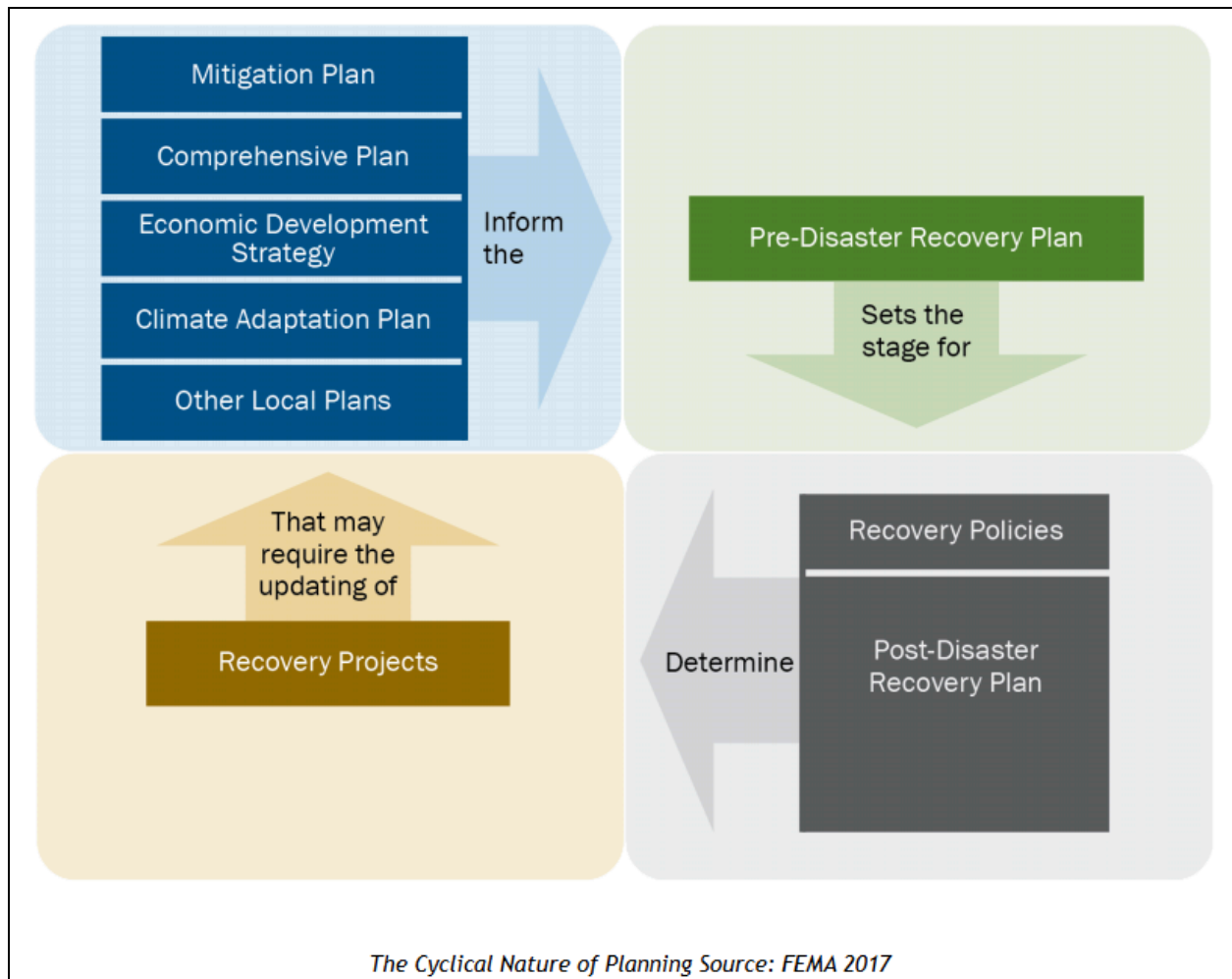
- 1) provides the framework to guide short-term recovery operations following emergency response, although there is some overlap into long-term recovery and
- 2) encompasses all disaster scenarios; it is not specific to wildfire recovery.

As stated in the current draft of the Disaster Recovery Plan, "The **Emergency Operations Director** will recommend to the **County Manager** when recovery operations would be more effectively managed under a **Long Term Recovery Group (LTRG)**... The organization within the EOC will transition from Emergency Support Functions (ESFs) to Recovery Support Functions (RSFs) at the discretion of the EOC Manager. *The primary factor for this decision is when the immediate threat to life and safety of the public has been reduced to an acceptable risk, similar to that before the hazardous event occurred, and first responders resume their normal operational tempo.*

The EOC, working with the RSFs, develops an initial recovery strategy and objectives, reviews progress made toward the attainment of these objectives, and serves as a hub where recovery tasks are coordinated with all participating agencies,”(Routt County Disaster Recovery Plan and Damage Assessment Procedures 04\_2824.Docx, n.d.).

According to the CSFS’s standards on developing CWPPs, CWPPs are not required but may include post-fire recommendations and integrated FEMA hazard mitigation plan elements (2023 Routt County CWPP Final 9-28-23\_small.Pdf, n.d. This playbook provides recommendations for incorporating pre-wildfire recovery planning into the next update of Routt County’s HMP and provides recommendations that complement mitigation projects identified in the 2023 CWPP. There are also recommendations in this plan which align with recommendations and guiding principles listed in the recently-adopted Routt County CAP.

Developing long term wildfire recovery strategies and objectives, assessing progress, and coordinating with partner agencies are tasks that this Playbook’s development has preemptively initiated, with the goal to ease the transition from ESFs to RSFs post-wildfire. It is imperative for the community’s collective vision that long-term wildfire recovery planning and project implementation integrates goals and objectives from these adopted county-wide plans, and others, such as the Yampa River Integrated Stream Management Plan. The recommendations found in this Playbook reflect this priority, but it will take an active multi-stakeholder effort to see these interdisciplinary planning priorities come to fruition in real projects.



**Figure D.2.** The Disaster Recovery Planning Cycle - This flowchart demonstrates how a pre-disaster recovery plan (in green) informs other formal plans and policies and vice versa.

#### **D.7. Policy and Regulatory Frameworks**

“Per **Routt County Resolution 2023-059**, the Routt County Emergency Operations Director is appointed to carry out the responsibilities under Colorado State Statute for emergency management, and the authority to administer the Routt County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP). As disaster recovery operations are an extension of emergency response, the authorities provided to the Emergency Operations Director under the EOP remain in effect during recovery operations. Furthermore, the Emergency Operations Director may delegate all or portions of these authorities and responsibilities to the Routt County Emergency Management Specialist if required due to non-availability of the Emergency Operations Director or due to the scale or

complexity of the event” (Routt County Disaster Recovery Plan and Damage Assessment Procedures 04\_2824.Docx, n.d.).

**Colorado Disaster Emergency Act (C.R.S. 24-33.5-701):** “By issuance of a Gubernatorial Executive Order, the Colorado State Emergency Operations Plan (SEOP) is activated. Adoption of the Plan through this order identifies that the Director of the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) within the Department of Public Safety will lead state disaster or emergency response and recovery efforts. Once the plan is activated, all state departments and offices are mandated under the authority of the Act and this Plan to carry out assigned activities related to mitigating effects of an emergency or disaster and to cooperate fully with each other, the OEM, and other political subdivisions in providing emergency assistance. The Colorado State Emergency Operations Plan outlines general guidelines on how the state carries out its response and recovery responsibilities,” (Colorado State Emergency Operations Plan | Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, n.d.).

**Colorado House Bill 1041...** “gives local governments additional authority for planning decisions related to areas or activities of statewide concern. This bill allows communities to identify, designate, and regulate those activities and areas through a local permitting process commonly known as ‘1041 regulations.’ The law was enacted to help clarify the roles and responsibilities of state and local governments in reviewing development projects that may have impacts beyond the local jurisdiction, and generally, the law allows the local jurisdiction to retain and increase control over such projects,” (1041 Regulations | Planning For Hazards, n.d.).

**The Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 5121-5207 §401** states in part that: “All requests for a declaration by the President that a major disaster exists shall be made by the Governor of the affected State” (FEMA.gov, 2024).

#### **D.8. Planning Assumptions**

- (1) The Long Term Wildfire Recovery Playbook (also referred to as “Playbook”) is meant to be utilized both before and after a wildfire event. Before a wildfire event, this document provides preparedness recommendations which, if followed, will assist in more effective, efficient, and equitable long-term recovery following a wildfire that results in catastrophic loss of life and/or property.
- (2) The Playbook assumes a wildfire will or has destroyed structures and/or taken lives in Routt County, and destroyed natural habitat and vistas.

- (3) This document is meant to be a playbook for local decision-makers and lead agencies to refer to as they lead the community through a long-term recovery process, which is initiated from the day after to a few years after the disaster.
- (4) This Playbook does not provide recommendations for the mitigation, response, or short-term recovery phases of disaster management, although some recommended and actual actions may overlap between short and long-term recovery.
- (5) The content of this Playbook is to be followed in accordance with the operational hierarchy of any official Routt County hazard, response, and recovery plans.
- (6) County Office of Emergency Management officials and other MAC group leaders should be made aware that the Playbook exists, of its content, and of the organizational structure of any LTRG that may result from the Playbook's development.
- (7) The recommendations in this Playbook are meant to be facilitated in a transparent and democratic manner via a LTRG, which consists of an organized group of CBO leaders, land management agency supervisors, policymakers, and local government civil servants.
- (8) The LTRG resulting from this Playbook will serve the needs of Routt County wildfire survivors, by supporting sustainable, equitable long-term restoration of the social, economic, built, and natural fabric of Routt County.

#### **D.9. Recovery Support Functions**

The Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) established a [National Disaster Recovery Framework](#) (NDRF), which identifies six Recovery Support Functions (RSFs) as an overall structure for coordinating recovery efforts. Per FEMA's NDRF webpage, "The objective of the RSFs is to facilitate the identification, coordination and delivery of federal assistance to local, state, tribal and territorial governments and the private and nonprofit sectors, accelerating the process of recovery, redevelopment and revitalization" (FEMA.gov).

Routt County's Recovery Plan has 10 RSFs identified. These are:

- Damage Assessment
- Debris Management
- Infrastructure
- Economic Recovery
- Natural and Cultural Resources
- Health and Social Services
- Community and Individual Assistance
- Housing
- Public Information
- Safety and Security

As for the scope of this long-term wildfire recovery Playbook, eight of the ten RSFs listed above will be addressed in some capacity, excluding only Damage Assessment (which OEM will direct) and Safety and Security.

#### **D.10. State and FEMA Involvement**

##### ***Q: When and how does the state and FEMA become involved in a disaster?***

In the event of any disaster, regardless of its severity, formal **damage assessments** must be completed to document the extent of destruction and needs before the disaster declaration process can move forward. More information about the damage assessment process is explained in the draft Routt County Disaster Recovery Plan, Section K, pages 4 and 16.

The Colorado Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHSEM) has regional Field Operations Managers who act as on-the-ground liaisons, providing technical assistance and operational support for initial damage assessments and the disaster declaration process between the County OEM and the DHSEM. As of spring 2025, the **Northwest Region's Field Manager is Danielle Aguilar**, ([danielle.aguilar@state.co.us](mailto:danielle.aguilar@state.co.us) , 303-918-1131).

Pending results from the damage assessments, the DHSEM Recovery Team will be called to the disaster area if warranted. The Recovery Team will assist with the declaration process and coordinate between FEMA, state agencies within and outside of the DHSEM, and local jurisdictions. Currently, the **State Disaster Recovery Program Manager is Kelly Strife** ([kelly.strife@state.co.us](mailto:kelly.strife@state.co.us) , 720-830-5859).

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will become involved in disaster recovery if the scale and cost of a disaster exceeds the capabilities of local and state disaster management resources. **FEMA Project Threshold information can**

**be found in the Appendix I, Section B.** Simply put, the impacted municipality declares a disaster to the County, the County then declares a disaster to the state. Then, the Governor requests a federal disaster declaration from the President. The President determines the type of declaration and which federal assistance programs are permitted to assist in recovery. For example, the East Troublesome Fire in neighboring Grand County, while declared a major federal disaster, was only granted Public Assistance, not Individual Assistance. **Public Assistance** grants are awarded to state, local, territorial, and tribal governments, and sometimes private non-profits. **Individual Assistance** grants are awarded to individual people and families.

*\*\*These assistance programs are almost always cost-share programs unless the President decides the federal government will cover the total cost of damages. It is up to the local and state governments to decide how to pay the non-federal balance of the cost-share.\*\**

***Q: What happens if a wildfire is not “grand or expensive” enough for FEMA to be involved or if FEMA’s capacity is already met nationwide?***

If FEMA resources are not available, other federal institutions such as the Small Business Administration (SBA) and the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) *may* be able to provide technical and funding assistance for *specific* recovery efforts. While state recovery funds are currently limited, the Governor can declare a state of emergency to free some funding in the state’s budget. The Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) also has funding available, which will be discussed further in Section H, Economic Recovery. **The majority of long-term support, financial or otherwise, comes from VOAD organizations** such as Team Rubicon, Salvation Army, American Red Cross, and through local community foundations and CBOs, such as the **Yampa Valley Community Foundation and United Way of the Yampa Valley.**

#### **D.11. How To Interpret This Playbook**

Each of the four main chapters, Social, Economic, Built Environment, and Natural Environment Recovery will be organized like the example below.

#### **F. Chapter Title - Social Recovery**

##### **F.1. Purpose**

##### **F.2. Overall Objectives**

**Table F.1.** Proposed Lead & Supporting Agencies - General

**Table F.2.** Potential Funding Sources



Pre-Wildfire Recommendations  
Post-Wildfire Recommendations

**F.3. Sub-Section - Housing**

**F.4. Housing Objectives**

**Table F.3. Proposed Supporting Agencies - Housing**

**F.5. Local Needs and Gaps**

Pre-Wildfire Recommendations  
Post-Wildfire Recommendations

**E. Long Term Recovery Group Governance & Structure**

The Routt County OEM is expected to publish their all hazards Disaster Recovery Plan in summer 2025. While the OEM will continue to operate in a leadership role during long-term recovery, after some time has passed since the incident, the OEM and emergency response teams need to readjust their primary focus back to mitigation, preparedness, and response. See the above Section D.5., Interaction With Existing Plans, for a more detailed explanation of how this Playbook's scope interacts with the Disaster Recovery Plan's protocol during the transition from short to long term recovery.

As defined by the Center for Disaster Philanthropy, *"A long-term recovery group is a cooperative body that is made up of representatives from faith-based, nonprofit, government, business and other organizations working within a community to assist individuals and families as they recover from disaster"* (Center for Disaster Philanthropy, 2024).

Here is another explanation, according to the [National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters' Long Term Recovery Guide](#), *"LTRGs are as varied in their structure as are the communities in which they work. The personality and operation of each group is unique and reflects local needs, available resources, cultural diversity, leadership style, and community support"* (National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, 2024). Whatever LTRGs call themselves, whatever priorities are agreed upon, however they are structured and governed, the purpose of LTRGs is the same: to provide coordinated service to enable *everyone* in the community to recover from wildfire impacts.

- LTRGs are usually made up of emergency management staff, CBO leaders, healthcare liaisons, and local government officials.

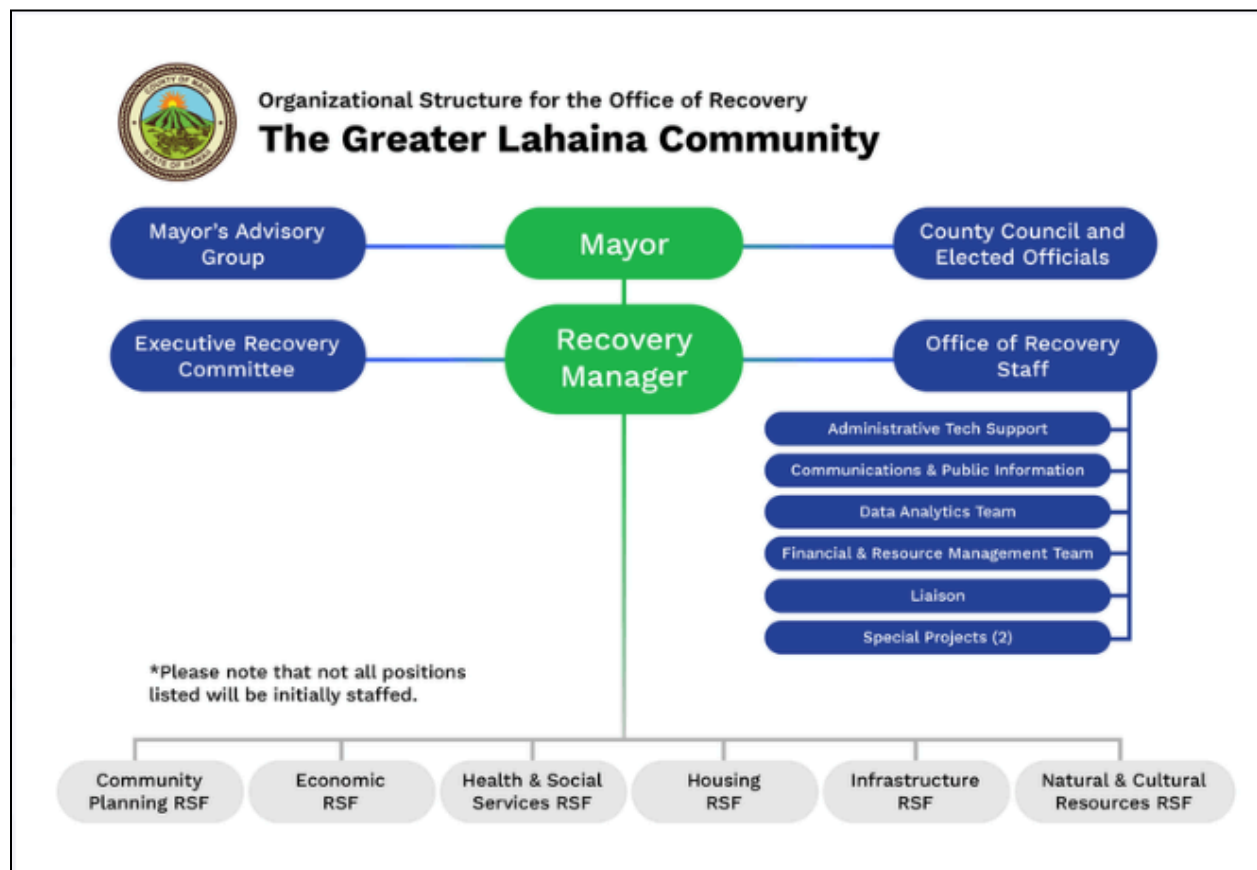
- Ideally, and depending on the extent of a wildfire's destruction, an LTRG is run by paid staff or there is a foundational organization and/or local government department dedicated to supporting meetings, forming agendas, recording minutes, and enabling communications for the LTRG.
- A fiscal sponsor or sponsors is / are needed to manage and coordinate recovery funds. Fiscal sponsors are non-profit organizations, community foundations, and local government departments, or a combination of these.
- Many LTRGs provide case management services to survivors, especially the most vulnerable community groups.
- Most LTRGs create by-laws to govern their work and sub-committees to carry out the work, in coordination with local organizations and agencies.

Regarding a LTRG's organization and governance, as stated in the Disaster Recovery Plan draft, "The Routt County **Emergency Operations Director**, utilizing the authorities specified in the Emergency Operations Plan, may continue to lead recovery efforts from the [Emergency Operations Center] for major emergencies that require significant participation from a variety of departments and agencies. Alternatively, the **Board of County Commissioners** or **County Manager** may identify a different recovery manager for recovery operations that primarily fall within the purview of a single department or agency," (Routt County Disaster Recovery Plan and Damage Assessment Procedures 04\_2824.Docx, n.d.).

## **Examples of LTRGs**

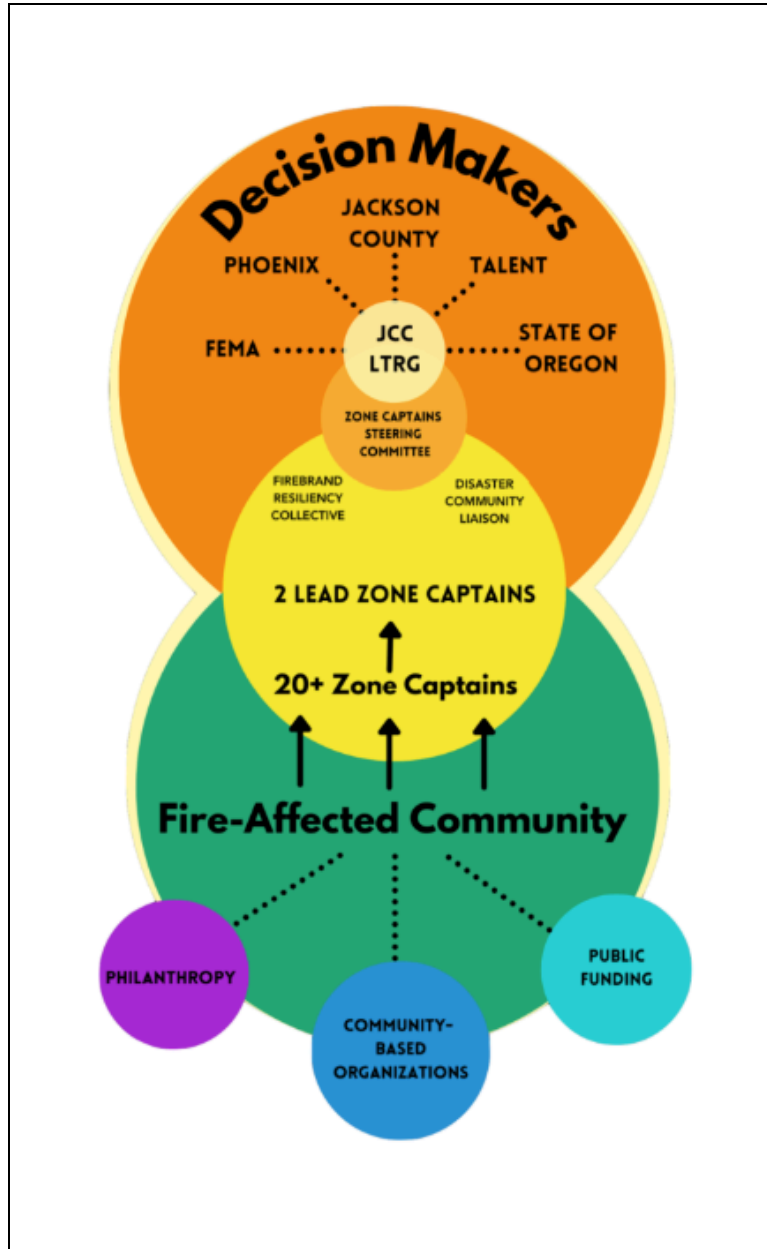
In the following examples of LTRGs, there are recovery groups housed within county government (Maui), separate non-profits specifically created for wildfire recovery (Florida, California, Oregon), existing non-profits that took on leading recovery (Grand County, CO), and a quasi-government / community-based structure where a city, county government, and a grassroots organization worked together to delegate recovery services (Boulder County, CO).

After the 2023 wildfires in Lahaina, Maui, Maui County government established their Office of Recovery.



**Figure E.1.** One example of a LTRG structure...“The Maui County’s Office of Recovery stands as a centralized hub orchestrating and overseeing recovery operations. It’s positioned not just to facilitate physical reconstruction, but also to revitalize the community, ensuring that the socio-economic fabric is restored, and strengthened,” (Office of Recovery, n.d.).

In **Ashland, Oregon, after the 2020 Almeda Fire** a *survivor-led* non-profit LTRG took shape. These survivors wanted to have the final say in how their community would be re-built, knowing that speculation and gentrification would morph their home into an unrecognizable place if they did not act tactfully. This is an amazing example of bottom-up, inclusive wildfire recovery that prioritizes **building back better** equitably.



**Figure E.2.** [Firebrand Resiliency Collective's](#) bottom-up organizational structure...Zone Captains, who are survivors, liaise with their neighbors to inform and advise the government decision-makers and keep everyone at all scales of recovery updated on progress in their respective service areas.

A LTRG was created in **Monroe County, Florida, after Hurricane Irma**. “The sub-committees of that LTRG include: Crisis Counseling/Spiritual Care, Community Assessment/Unmet Needs Committee, Disaster Case Management Committee, Finance Committee, Donations Management, Volunteer Coordination/Management, Construction Coordination Committee, Government Coordination Committee and Communications/Public Relations Committee” (Center for Disaster Philanthropy, 2024).

After the **2018 Camp Fire in Butte County, California**, the [Camp Fire Collaborative](https://campfire-collaborative.org) was formed to provide survivors with resources and case management services, and delivers a real-life example of what a Routt County LTRG may become or may coordinate after an unprecedented wildfire. You can also find this link in the References Section M, sub-section I ([campfire-collaborative.org](https://campfire-collaborative.org), 2024).

A LTRG was formed in **Boulder County, Colorado, following the 2013 floods**. “The City partnered with Boulder County and the Long-Term Flood Recovery Group (LTFRG – a county-based recovery organization) to provide case management assistance to impacted city residents. This included setting up five walk-in recovery assistance centers and a flood recovery hotline. The organization organized and/or coordinated an equivalent of over \$3.4 million worth of volunteer hours that the city was able to leverage in part to cover local match requirements of FEMA disaster assistance” (Colorado Resiliency Office, 2024).

According to A. Wilhelme, after the **2020 East Troublesome Fire in Grand County, Colorado** the Grand County Community Foundation provided a fiscal hub and coordination for individual assistance. FEMA Public Assistance was granted for the East Troublesome Fire, while Individual Assistance was not, so the Grand County Community Foundation, while not a LTRG, addressed a serious community recovery need that the federal government could not (personal communication, 2024).

### PRE-WILDFIRE RECOMMENDATIONS - FORMING A LTRG:

1. Identify members from the recommended lead agencies and CBOs listed in this Playbook, or through other networks, such as the **OEM’s MAC group**. Request agency representatives help form the LTRG. A county OEM staff person will be a LTRG leader.
2. Establish a position in the LTRG for an equity lead / liaison. This person’s responsibility is to assess LTRG practices, and any resulting recovery policies and programs, for possible biases, inequities, and injustices and alert the rest of the LTRG to course correct. This person communicates with marginalized groups to include their needs and desires in the planning process.

3. Coordinate with the **OEM** and **Routt County government officials** to outline a more detailed transition plan from short to long term wildfire recovery which includes...
  - a. Chain of command / organizational structure
  - b. RWG Committees (these depend on the nature of the incident)
  - c. **LTRG members** and their roles and responsibilities
  - d. Location and nature of recovery hub (i.e. Is a new non-profit created to house the LTRG? Is the LTRG centrally operated by the County government? Are all RSF employees and programs housed in the same physical location or are these tasks completed separately from existing workplaces by existing CBO and/or government employees?)
4. Create by-laws which will direct the group's work.
5. Determine the fiscal sponsor(s) for the LTRG and their scope(s).
  - a. Depending on the agreed upon organizational structure, the fiscal sponsor may be the County government, it may be a CBO, or it could be a combination of both / multiple.
6. Review formal county and municipal plans to create appropriate goals / values / priorities which will guide all projects throughout the long-term recovery planning and implementation process, pre- and post-wildfire.
  - a. **The OEM's most recent COOP and EOP** are especially important to review when establishing a LTRG's organizational structure and governance.
7. The Colorado Resiliency Office (CRO) created guidance for pre-disaster recovery planning with a [pre-disaster recovery step-by-step workbook and toolkit](#) which the LTRG, and local government officials, can use to create a detailed pre-disaster recovery plan. Some of the work recommended in the workbook has been started through the development of this Playbook.
8. In addition to pre-disaster recovery planning, the Colorado Resiliency Office created guidance for post-disaster planning with a [post-disaster recovery step-by-step workbook and toolkit](#) which the LTRG, and local government officials, can use to create a detailed post-disaster recovery plan. Some of the work recommended in the workbook has been started through the development of this Playbook.
9. Suggestion for organizational structure - Determine the "Recovery Working Groups" (RWGs) which will tackle specific pre- and post-recommendations

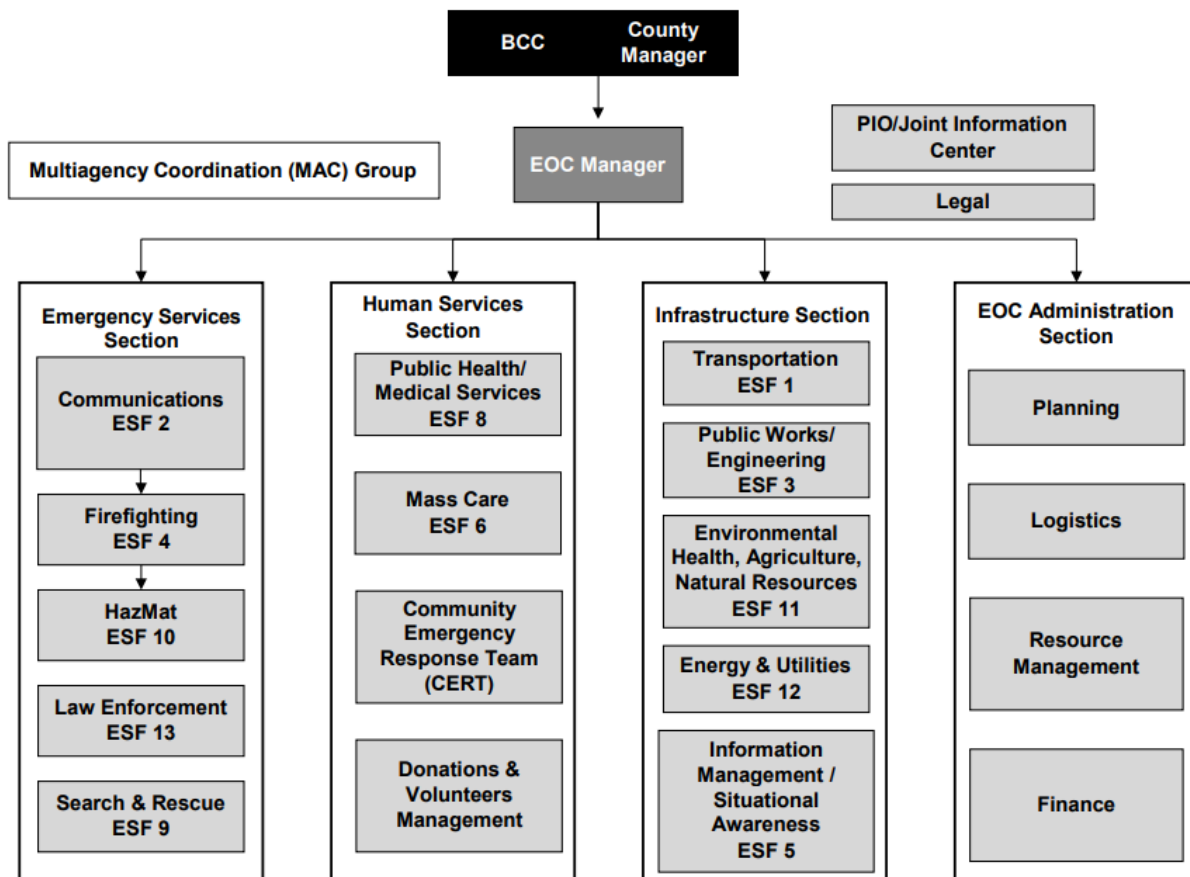
included in this Playbook and the CRO workbooks, such as a housing RWG, a business and tourism RWG, a communication RWG, etc. Decide on a chairperson to lead each RWG. The RWGs are “committees” falling under the LTRG umbrella.

10. Carry out the agreed-upon recommendations identified in this Playbook and through the CRO workbook process mentioned above, in partnership with other CBOs, land management agencies, and local governments.
11. Meet in regularly scheduled intervals to update fellow LTRG members on the status of projects.
  - a. Currently, the All-Hazards MAC Group meets quarterly.

## **F. General Disaster Recovery Recommendations**

### PRE-WILDFIRE RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Coordinate with the **OEM** and **Routt County government officials** to outline a more detailed transition plan from short to long term wildfire recovery which includes...
  - Chain of command, elections, and succession (if applicable)
  - RWG Committees (these depend on the nature of the incident)
  - LTRG members and their roles and responsibilities
  - Location and nature of recovery hub (i.e. Is a new non-profit created to house the LTRG? Is the LTRG centrally operated by the County government in a Disaster Recovery Center? Are all RSF employees and programs housed in the same physical location or are these tasks completed separately from existing workplaces by existing CBO and/or government employees?)
  - Frequency of internal LTRG updates
  - **See Figure F.1.** for the EOC Organization. **This structure can inform how a LTRG is organized and how responsibilities are transferred from the EOC Manager / OEM to the LTRG.**



**Figure F.1.** - Emergency Operations Center Organization: This organizational structure can inform how short term recovery responsibilities are transferred from the OEM / EOC Manager to a LTRG.

- The **Colorado DHSEM Recovery Program** provides pre-disaster recovery planning support and training. The LTRG should connect with the Routt County OEM and Kelly Strife, the State Disaster Recovery Program Manager, to establish a relationship and learn more about local and state resources.
- **Yampa Valley Community Foundation** and **United Way of the Yampa Valley** negotiate and update their disaster relief fund MOU as it relates to donation management. **Appropriate County government departments** should be included in this planning process and the MOU to act as a safety net to potential operational hardship with a surging influx of funds post-wildfire.



- LTRG members review recommendations, future projects, and suggested strategies from other formalized municipal and county Plans, including the Routt County **Climate Action Plan**, and incorporate those findings into the LTWRP.
- The LTRG considers the entire long-term recovery process through a vulnerability perspective. Planning through a vulnerability lens ensures the needs of at-risk populations are prioritized, leading to more equitable and inclusive recovery.
- Elected officials should be made aware of recovery planning and should be included in the planning process if they desire.

#### POST-WILDFIRE RECOMMENDATION:

- The **OEM** coordinates damage assessments. Damage assessments are one of the first steps taken in the recovery phase. These reports are instrumental in understanding hazards, the depth and scope of needs, and jumpstarting the disaster declaration process. Conducting these assessments could include assistance from LTRG members should they be asked to help.
- The **OEM** informs LTRG members of unmet needs after initial damage assessments are completed relating to intermediate and long-term recovery.
- As following damage assessments are completed, OEM and the LTRG are informed of evolving risks and needs so they can jointly determine appropriate long-term risk management approaches.
- The LTRG matches recommendations, future projects, and suggested strategies from other formalized municipal and county Plans, including the Routt County Climate Action Plan, to on-the-ground needs, and those findings are incorporated into recovery initiatives to build back better.