

## 2024 IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

# Mountain Region

Across Colorado's Mountain Region, CSU Extension specialists are serving their communities and addressing local needs by sharing expertise and resources, delivering educational programming, strengthening partnerships, and engaging youth and volunteers.

Key impact areas for Mountain Region specialists in 2024 spanned topics such as youth outreach, health promotion, food systems, natural resources, gardening, agriculture, volunteer engagement, and more.

**Across the state, Extension is where Colorado State University meets community.**



**COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY**  
EXTENSION

# Mountain Region

## *Extension in Your Region*

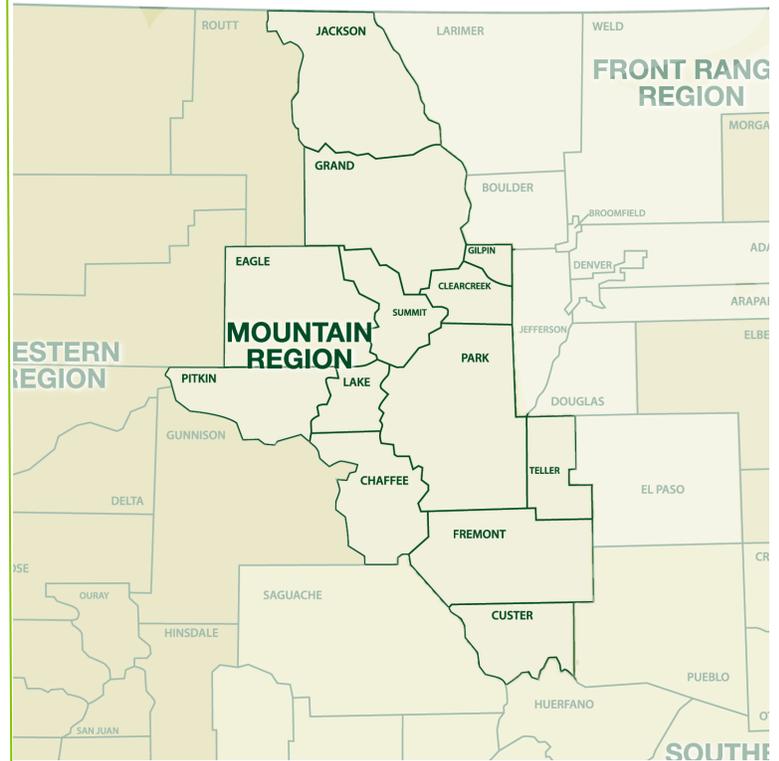
**For over 100 years**, CSU Extension has strived to be your trusted partner connecting Coloradans to education and actionable, science-based solutions in your community.

### COUNTY EXTENSION DIRECTORS

- **Chaffee County:** Monica Pless
- **Clear Creek:** *Vacant*
- **Custer County:** Reggie Foster
- **Eagle County:** Glenda Wentworth
- **Fremont County:** Julianne Dinkel
- **Gilpin County:** Jennifer Cook
- **Grand County:** Sydney Pryor
- **Jackson County:** *Search Underway*
- **Lake County:** Diana Solenberger
- **Park County:** Kurt Jones (Interim)
- **Pitkin County:** Drew Walters (Specialist)
- **Summit County:** Dan Schroder
- **Teller County:** Darian Founds

### REGIONAL SPECIALISTS

- **Health & Well-Being:** Jennifer Aengst
- **Food & Agriculture:** Derek Lowstuter
- **Accessible Education:** Barbie Garnett
- **Small Acreage Management:** Bonface Manono
- **Community & Economic Development:** Willie Wilkins
- **Behavioral Health:** Kirsten Wulfsberg



### LEADERSHIP

#### **Kurt Jones**

**Extension Regional Director, Mountain Region**

[Kurt.Jones@colostate.edu](mailto:Kurt.Jones@colostate.edu)

#### **Leah Senator**

**Regional Assistant, Mountain Region**

[Leah.Senator@colostate.edu](mailto:Leah.Senator@colostate.edu)

#### **James Pritchett**

**Vice President for Engagement and Extension**

[James.Pritchett@colostate.edu](mailto:James.Pritchett@colostate.edu)

#### **Eric McPhail**

**Extension Field Director**

[Eric.McPhail@colostate.edu](mailto:Eric.McPhail@colostate.edu)

# By The Numbers

## STATEWIDE REACH & PROGRAMMING

**242.5**

CSU Extension Positions Statewide

### Statewide Program Highlights:

#### 4-H Youth Development

##### Agriculture

- AgrAbility
- Agricultural Business Management
- Annie's Project
- Climate Smart Agriculture
- Colorado Building Farmers and Ranchers
- Cropping Systems
- Livestock
- Pesticide Applicator
- Rangeland
- Total Ranch Analysis for Colorado

##### Community & Economic Development

- Family Leadership Training Institute (FLTI)
- Workforce Development

##### Emergency Management

##### Food Systems

##### Health and Wellbeing

- Behavioral Health & Resilience
- Cooking Matters
- Cottage Food Safety
- CSU Produce Network
- Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP)
- Financial Health
- Food Safety, Preservation, Preparation
- Healthy Aging
- Master Food Safety Advisor
- Nutrition, Disease Prevention and Management

##### Horticulture

- Beekeeping
- Colorado Master Gardener
- Grow & Give
- Landscape for Life
- Seed Saving/Free Seeds

##### Natural Resources

- Native Bee Watch
- Native Plant Master
- Rocky Mountain Naturalist

## MOUNTAIN REGION

**22**

CSU Positions  
20 Positions Fully or Partially Funded by CSU

**11**

County Positions  
Hired/Funded

## REGIONAL YOUTH & VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT



**1,392**

4-H Youth Reached

**461**

4-H Volunteers

Colorado  
Master  
Gardener

**72**

Volunteers

**2,851.5**

Volunteer Hours

## CSU IN THE MOUNTAIN REGION - 2024

**12,175**

Contacts reached through consultations and presentations

**5**

CSU Extension Summer Internship projects connected to research and programs in the Mountain Region. 2024 internship topics included:

- Pollinator health and conservation
- Water quality, water management
- Agricultural literacy, ag education
- Livestock and dairy production
- Food systems, producer support
- Health, nutrition, food safety
- Disaster preparedness & response
- Mental & physical health promotion
- Community engagement
- Youth education, rural outreach
- Horticulture and plant health



## 2024 Impact Highlights

### Chaffee County

#### Parkinson's Disease Support Group

A new Parkinson's Disease Support Group was formed in 2024 in response to an increasing population of retirees and the need to grow the support system for those with Parkinson's. Designed to supplement existing therapy groups that were overtaxed, this program of AgrAbility served 31 people in its first six months, with an average of 15 people attending each meeting. The initiative is a partnership with Parkinson's Association of the Rockies and is intended to provide support as well as education, including presentations on nutrition and emerging therapies.

### Clear Creek County

#### Collaborative Pathways for Economic Resilience

To address declining property tax revenue and other factors impacting Clear Creek County, regional partners including the Clear Creek Economic Development Corporation, Denver Regional Council of Governments, and Colorado State University are working to advance a proactive, diversified strategy to reduce economic vulnerability, enhance long-term sustainability, and capitalize on the county's unique geographic and demographic strengths.

- **Read more:** [https://csuredi.org/redi\\_reports/collaborative-pathways-to-economic-resilience-in-clear-creek-county/](https://csuredi.org/redi_reports/collaborative-pathways-to-economic-resilience-in-clear-creek-county/)

### Custer County

#### Weeds Lunch and Learn

Custer County Extension developed the Weeds Lunch and Learn initiative as a way to provide community members with educational information about managing weeds and other related issues. The program provided participants with a baseline understanding of noxious weeds and weed management strategies, along with a take-home kit that included a weed identification manual. Five attendees reported applying for Custer County's cost-share program which they learned about during the lunch, and were able to apply their knowledge to treatments conducted on their own properties.

### Eagle County

#### Family Leadership Training Institute

Strong communities depend on having community members who embrace participating in leadership and civic engagement. The Eagle County Family Leadership Training Institute is an evidence-based, 20-week curriculum focused on building skills and tools for individual and community leadership, inclusive collaboration, and civic engagement.

### Fremont County

#### Event Center Economic Impact Internship

A CSU Extension summer intern and graduate student, Henry Williams, supported research efforts in Fremont County as part of a 2024 internship project, "Contribution Analysis of Pathfinder Event Center on the Local Economy." Willie Wilkins, CSU Extension regional specialist for economic and community development, served as the lead mentor for the internship project.

The outcomes of the project included an economic impact study and actionable data to help leadership in Fremont county understand the Pathfinder Events Center's financial impact on the community in order to inform decision-making and prioritize future investments. The Extension intern supporting the project helped collect and analyze information that was then presented to the county manager, county commissioners, and various stakeholders in Fremont County.

### Gilpin County

#### Wolf Reintroduction Workshop

This workshop provided 51 attendees with unbiased, science-based information on the topic of wolf reintroduction. Jennifer Cook, Gilpin County Extension director and specialist in natural resources, horticulture and energy, partnered with a CSU expert in human-wildlife conflict as well as a representative of Colorado Parks and Wildlife for a panel session during the workshop which focused on addressing the nuances around wolf reintroduction in Colorado.

### Grand County

#### Grand Community Gardens Partnership

Grand Community Gardens is a program that partners with the county Extension office to promote and support gardening throughout Grand County. The program also operates community garden sites in Kremmling, Hot Sulphur Springs, and Granby. Extension specialists, Master Gardener volunteers, and Grand Community Gardens offer classes each spring designed to address community gardening needs, provide information about common issues and questions, and promote gardening best practices.

### Jackson County

#### Post-Wildfire Water Quality Research

A 2024 CSU Extension summer internship project supported collaborative field research efforts to study and understand the impacts of the 2020 Cameron Peak Fire on streams, reservoirs, and tributaries in impacted areas including southeastern Jackson County and Larimer County.

Working under the mentorship of CSU research associate Sam Struthers, Extension intern Andrew Schwartz conducted water quality testing as part of this longer-term effort by CSU researchers to develop a comprehensive dataset to help inform post-wildfire water research, resource management, and wildfire restoration decisions. Schwartz also worked closely with researchers from the U.S. Forest Service and CSU's Radical Open Science Syndicate in the Ecosystem Science and Sustainability department to conduct testing, monitor sensors, and process samples through the Rocky Mountain Research Station biogeochemistry lab.

## Park County

### Eat Well – Live Well

With the goal of supporting health and well-being among older adults in Park County, Extension specialists hosted workshops for community members to learn about nutrition, food budgeting tips, and recipes for meals that address common health issues and challenges such as diabetes, the need for soft food, and easy meal preparation for one or two people.

## Summit County

### Community Chipping Program

Creating defensible space around mountain properties can save homes during a wildfire. The Summit County Community Chipping Program is a county-wide defensible space effort that includes a broad-reaching education campaign to accompany free roadside pick-up of slash. In 2024 there were 1,918 participants in the program, resulting in the removal of 5,236 cubic yards of woody vegetation from neighborhoods to reduce fuels for future wildfires.

## Teller County

### Rural Action Project

The Rural Action Project (RAP) supports rural communities across Colorado by bringing residents together to shape the future of their communities and build civic capacity by expanding their network connections, boosting local leadership, and fostering dialogue and inclusive engagement opportunities that boost community resilience. The RAP process follows a series of facilitated conversations where participants a) identify community assets and needs; b) understand and participate in storytelling activities; and c) develop and implement a local project based on identified needs and opportunities.

In Teller County, RAP participants and 4-H youth worked together to develop a campaign designed to spread kindness, good deeds, and community connections, and to promote the positive work of 4-H in the community. They produced t-shirts, water bottles, stickers, and pins with positive messages that they sold at community events to raise funds for their program and other local non-profit organizations. Teller County was one of 15 communities across Colorado that were part of the two-year initiative. In total across the state, RAP's outcomes and impacts included:

- 375 participants
- 15 communities engaged (*Roaring Fork Valley, Teller County, Rock Ledge Ranch, Cripple Creek, Montrose, San Luis Valley, Huerfano County, Prowers County, Cheyenne County, Kit Carson County, City of Wray, Morgan County, Logan County, Sedgwick County, Phillips County*)
- 18 funded projects
- Over \$100,000 distributed to participating communities to support project development and implementation

## STATEWIDE SPOTLIGHT: YOUTH LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT



### Colorado 4-H Youth Development

4-H is delivered by Colorado State University Extension and reaches over 110,000 youth in Colorado annually, helping them to become confident, independent, resilient and compassionate leaders. Colorado 4-H engages with youth across the state through hands-on projects in areas including health, science, agriculture and citizenship.

Across the state, more than 10,000 volunteers and almost 100 4-H professionals and staff members provide support and mentorships to 4-H youth through locally based clubs, programs, and activities.

Colorado 4-H reached **1,392 youth** and engaged **461 volunteers** across Colorado's Mountain Region in 2024.