GENERATION WILD AT 10 YEARS
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Background

Generation Wild is a statewide movement launched by Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) to connect kids and families to the outdoors through community-led coalitions and a statewide communications campaign.

Through Generation Wild, GOCO has invested more than $75 million in 14 communities across Colorado to reduce barriers to outdoor experiences and foster lifelong connections to nature. The program's statewide network of communities, leaders, youth, and partners is working together to create equitable access to the outdoors.

Project Overview

As Generation Wild enters its second decade, GOCO seeks an evaluation and strategic learning partner or team of partners with experience assessing community-led initiatives, coalitions, and systems change. The selected partner or team will combine qualitative and quantitative research, network analysis, inclusive community engagement, and compelling storytelling to help GOCO understand Generation Wild's contributions over its first decade and inform future investments and program development.

Through this project, GOCO aims to understand how Generation Wild has influenced youth, families, communities, Colorado's youth-and-outdoors movement, and the broader outdoor equity movement. This includes exploring changes in access to outdoor experiences, sustained participation in nature, and leadership and career pathways for youth and families. The project will also examine how and why changes occur in different local contexts and identify what contributes to successful and sustainable Generation Wild coalitions.

Scope of Work

Proposals should articulate an approach to help GOCO explore the following areas. The learning questions included below are intended to guide the consultant's proposed methodology and should not be interpreted as a required checklist. GOCO welcomes alternative or additional questions that support the project.

Literature Review

Review existing literature and research relevant to Generation Wild, such as impacts and trends in:

- Youth and community leadership
- Coalition evolution and resilience
- Funder behaviors, including long-term investment and flexible funding
- Technical assistance, capacity building, shared learning, and statewide coordination
- Youth connection to nature and participation in outdoor activities
- Physical and mental health of youth today
- Outdoor career pathways
- Existing Generation Wild, GOCO, and partner research

The literature review should identify current research and promising practices that help validate, challenge, or expand the Generation Wild approach. GOCO will provide the selected consultant with access to existing reports, evaluations, and other background materials to inform the project, with additional research on contemporary data and trends required.

The Generation Wild Model

Generation Wild is built around a community-based approach that combines long-term investment, community-led coalitions, a focus on underrepresented communities, flexible funding, technical assistance, capacity building, shared learning, and statewide coordination.

- How do these elements work together?
- Which elements appear to contribute most to community change?
- How should our approach evolve?
- How can GOCO better understand who Generation Wild reaches, including participant demographics, when individual-level tracking is limited?

Network Analysis

Examine how relationships within and across Generation Wild communities have developed over time, including connections among coalition partners, between communities, and with GOCO and other statewide partners. Identify who is represented in the network and where gaps in participation, representation, or connections may exist.

- How has the network evolved over time?
- How have relationships within and across Generation Wild communities supported collaboration, shared learning, and access to resources and opportunities?
- Which relationships have proven most valuable?
- What opportunities exist to further strengthen peer learning and collaboration?

- Who is represented in the network and where are there gaps in participation, representation, or connections?

Community Change

Examine how communities served by Generation Wild coalitions have changed over the past decade and identify examples of community, organizational, systems, and youth-level changes associated with Generation Wild.

- How has Generation Wild influenced youth participation in outdoor experiences?
- How has Generation Wild influenced the broader ecosystem of organizations serving youth and families?
- How have Generation Wild communities changed over the past decade?
- What evidence exists regarding long-term outcomes or impacts for youth and families who have participated in Generation Wild-supported efforts?

Coalition Success and Sustainability

Explore factors that contribute to successful and sustainable Generation Wild communities, including lessons learned from communities that have evolved, merged, or concluded, and how communities adapt as funding changes over time.

- What factors contribute to coalition success and sustainability?
- How do Generation Wild communities evolve over time, and what factors influence whether communities sustain, merge, or conclude?
- What key supports are needed for new Generation Wild communities?

Community and Stakeholder Engagement

GOCO anticipates that the consultant will engage representatives from all 14 current Generation Wild communities and approximately three former Generation Wild communities as part of this project.

Community engagement could include a combination of interviews, surveys, focus groups, and participation in existing Generation Wild convenings where appropriate.

Generation Wild Shared Learning, held January 19-21, 2027, will provide an opportunity to engage representatives from all current Generation Wild communities in a single location. Additional virtual or in-person engagement will likely be needed.

Consultants should recommend an engagement methodology appropriate for the project.

Intersection with Generation Wild Communications Campaign

While this learning opportunity will primarily focus on the Generation Wild grant program, the Generation

Wild communications campaign is an important complementary component of the broader initiative. As part of the evaluation, the selected team may identify insights relevant to the campaign's future evolution, including potential gaps in the resources Generation Wild provides to families. These findings could help inform future campaign strategies, tools, and assets without expanding the evaluation's primary focus.

Storytelling

GOCO seeks compelling stories that illustrate the human impact behind the findings and capture the Generation Wild experience. Examples may include community profiles, youth leadership stories, coalition evolution stories, benefits of nature exposure, and stories that highlight both successes and lessons learned. The profiles should reflect a range of local contexts and can be included in the final report or provided as standalone pieces.

Final Report

The final report should balance qualitative stories, quantitative findings, and practical recommendations that help strengthen Generation Wild into the future.

- What is uniquely true today in Colorado because Generation Wild has existed for the past decade?
- What lessons should shape the next decade of Generation Wild?
- How can the findings support clear, credible statements about Generation Wild's impact?

GOCO welcomes recommendations on the format and organization of the final report and supporting deliverables. Proposals should address the following components, which may be integrated into the final report or provided as supporting deliverables:

- Executive summary
- Literature review
- Summary of engagement findings
- Findings about the Generation Wild model
- Network analysis findings
- Community change analysis
- Coalition success and sustainability findings
- Stories or case studies
- Recommendations for the next decade of Generation Wild
- Slide deck suitable for board and stakeholder presentations

Project Timeline

The project is anticipated to begin in late 2026 and conclude in September 2027, though we recognize that consultants may propose alternative timelines based on scope of work and methodology. GOCO anticipates that the selected consultant will attend the January 2027 Generation Wild Shared Learning event.

Proposal Submission

Interested parties are invited to submit a proposal addressing the following:

1. Qualifications (up to 2 pages)
    - Relevant experience conducting organizational learning, learning studies, strategic assessments, community-based evaluations, or systems change initiatives.
    - Experience working with coalitions, community-based initiatives, youth development, or outdoor equity efforts.
    - Examples of projects that combine qualitative storytelling with quantitative analysis.
2. Approach (up to 5 pages)
    - A proposed methodology for exploring the core scope of work and key learning questions.
    - Recommended approaches for Generation Wild community engagement and data collection.
    - A proposed work plan, including key phases, milestones, and anticipated deliverables.
    - Ideas for storytelling and final deliverables.
3. Short biographies of key staff.
4. Timeline
    - Provide a proposed project timeline including major milestones and deliverables.
5. Budget
    - Provide a detailed budget outlining all anticipated costs, including consultant fees, travel, and materials.
6. Relevant prior work examples and references.

Please note that the final scope of work may be refined after consultant selection.

Evaluation and Selection

GOCO may interview finalists and will evaluate proposals based on the following criteria:

- Understanding and Approach: Demonstrated understanding of Generation Wild, the project's objectives, and the quality, practicality, and creativity of the proposed approach.
- Relevant Experience: Experience with program evaluation, organizational learning, community-based initiatives, coalition development, and systems change, particularly in areas related to youth development, outdoor access, and community engagement.
- Methodology and Deliverables: Strength of the proposed research and engagement methods, including the ability to integrate qualitative and quantitative findings, capture meaningful stories, and translate findings into actionable recommendations.

- Qualifications and Capacity: Qualifications of the proposed team, demonstrated success with comparable projects, quality of prior work and references, and capacity to complete the project within the proposed timeline.
- Cost and Overall Value: Reasonableness of the proposed budget relative to the scope of work, anticipated deliverables, and overall value to GOCO.

Additional Terms

GOCO reserves the right to waive minor irregularities, request clarification or additional information, interview respondents, negotiate with one or more respondents, reject any or all proposals, or cancel or reissue this RFP. GOCO is not obligated to select the lowest-cost proposal. Respondents are responsible for all costs associated with preparing and submitting proposals. Submitted materials may be subject to disclosure under the Colorado Open Records Act (CORA).

The selected consultant will be required to enter into a written agreement with GOCO, maintain any required insurance and registrations, protect confidential and sensitive information, disclose potential conflicts of interest, and comply with applicable laws and regulations. The consultant will be expected to use appropriate data collection, privacy, and consent practices, particularly when engaging youth and families.

The final scope of work, deliverables, timeline, and budget will be established through the contracting process and may be refined in consultation with the selected consultant.

Questions and Clarifications

All questions or requests for clarification regarding this RFP should be submitted in writing to Chris Aaby at caaby@goco.org by November 9, 2026. Responses to submitted questions will be shared with all RFP respondents through a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document.

Proposal Submission Deadline

Please submit your proposal by November 23, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. MST to Chris Aaby at caaby@goco.org.

We appreciate your interest in helping GOCO reflect on the first decade of Generation Wild and shape the movement's future.