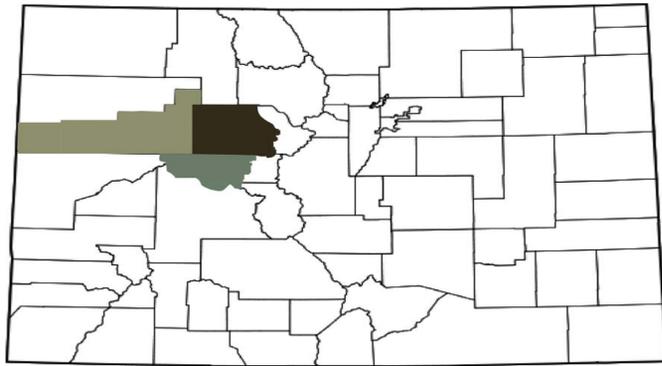


Growing the Regional Food System through Land Use Policies in Garfield, Pitkin, and Eagle Counties

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Introduction

In 2018, Garfield County conducted a county-wide food assessment and found that the two biggest barriers for local producers are adequate access to land and water. Stakeholders shared that farmers in Pitkin and Eagle Counties face similar challenges. At the request of the Safe and Abundant Nutrition Alliance (SANA), this project was compiled to provide policy and program recommendations that will make land and water accessible to first-generation farmers, prioritize the preservation of farmlands for use in fruit and vegetable farming, and provide local market opportunities for first-generation farmers. The land use code, comprehensive plan, open space policies, and third-party conservation efforts were evaluated for each of the three counties.



Garfield County Eagle County Pitkin County

Findings

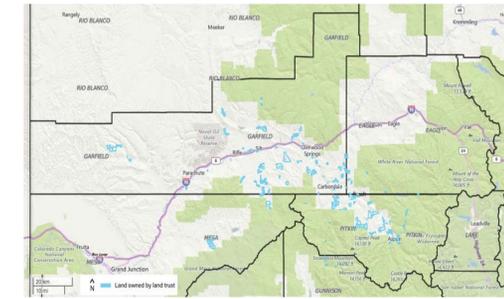
Land Use Tools by County

	Cluster Development	Urban Growth Boundary	Transfer/Purchase of Development Rights	Conservation Easement	Open Space Program with Land Leasing
Garfield County					
Eagle County					
Pitkin County					

- Each county's planning department has prioritized the preservation of agricultural lands and set goals to do so in their comprehensive plans, but many of them are yet to be implemented.
- Programs that encourage fruit and vegetable farming specifically and those that support the economic development of the local food system still need to be developed.
- Pitkin County is the only county to distinguish farming from agriculture in their land use code, and all three counties could include more specific language in their codes to legitimize farmers' markets and produce stands and streamline permitting for these uses.
- Improved regional cooperation is necessary for growing the food system at a regional level.

Land Trusts

Aspen Valley Land Trust



Eagle Valley Land Trust



Land trusts play a major role in agricultural conservation in these three counties. The lands owned by the Aspen Valley Land Trust (above) and the Eagle Valley Land Trust (left) are highlighted here in blue.

Source: CSU COMap

Recommendations

Make land and water available and affordable to first-generation farmers.

Policy 1: Diversify preservation tools, including TDR programs and Open Space programs.

Cost: \$\$

Key Players: Planning Departments, BLM, NRCS, SANA, Land Trusts

Policy 2: Encourage land leasing by private land owners.

Cost: \$

Key Players: SANA, CSU Extension, Land Trusts

Policy 3: Pursue water reuse for agricultural lands.

Cost: \$\$\$\$

Key Players: SANA, CSU Extension, Planning Departments, Public Works, EPA

Prioritize the preservation of farmlands for use in fruit and vegetable farming.

Policy 1: Support new opportunities for the agricultural production of produce.

Cost: \$

Key Players: SANA, Aspen Valley Land Trust, Eagle Valley Land Trust, Roaring Fork Farmers and Ranchers groups

Policy 2: Educate the community on the local food system and the value of agricultural lands.

Cost: \$\$

Key Players: SANA, CSU Extension, School Districts, Guidestone Colorado

Provide local market opportunities for first-generation farmers.

Policy 1: Refine the use regulations for farmers' markets and farm stands to encourage permanent access.

Cost: \$

Key Players: Planning Departments, SANA

Policy 2: Create a regional food hub to encourage the development of small farm businesses.

Cost: \$\$\$

Key Players: SANA, Economic Development Departments, Planning Departments

Policy 3: Develop policies for local food procurement.

Cost: \$

Key Players: SANA, Local Governments, School Districts, CSU Extension

Improve Regional Cooperation

Policy 1: Establish SANA as a regional food policy council and involve strategic players.

Cost: \$

Key Players: SANA



Source: Highwater Farm

Highwater Farm is one of many new farmers in the region who have benefitted from the assistance of the Aspen Valley Land Trust. However, they still face barriers of capital funding and accessing markets.