
The Nature Conservancy of Colorado

Metro Denver Regional Conservation Assessment

Denver, Colorado



A comprehensive habitat assessment methodology streamlines and facilitates a multi-county effort to restore, protect, and enhance habitat connectivity.

SERVICES

Conservation Planning

Colorado has one of the fastest growing population rates in the U.S., and much of that growth is occurring in the Denver metro area. Given the pressure of this development on the region's natural resources, the Metro Denver Nature Alliance (MDNA), a 50-partner coalition collaborating to create a conservation vision for the seven-county region, sought to create a comprehensive approach to land use planning. Biohabitats worked with MDNA and its founding member, The Nature Conservancy, to develop a preliminary conservation framework for prioritizing open space planning initiatives. The project included the development of a common language and understanding of conservation and restoration opportunities to facilitate ongoing dialogue within and beyond the MDNA.

Biohabitats began by compiling existing land cover and other spatial data sets relevant to conservation planning to create a geospatial framework which established planning zones. In collaboration with a Technical Advisory Team, Biohabitats developed a high quality assessment methodology involving a synthesis of multiple habitat criteria, including climate resiliency. Multiple connectivity analysis models were developed and used to engage a multi-jurisdictional Leadership Team to gain feedback about their potential use. Guided by that feedback, Biohabitats developed a comprehensive conservation map identifying core areas, corridors, critical gaps, connectivity barriers, and important conservation and restoration opportunities. This assessment, combined with information related to recreation, social vulnerability, access, capital planning, and other conservation-related considerations, enables MDNA to plan holistically and prioritize actions in a way that values people and the natural landscapes we enjoy and on which we depend.