

# Outdoor Recreation Initiative (ORI)

## 2026 Program Overview



### WHAT IS ORI?

The Outdoor Recreation Initiative is a locally-led funding program created by the Utah Division of Outdoor Recreation to support the Utah Outdoor Recreation Strategic Plan. Using regional recreation councils, the ORI program works with local communities to support large-scale recreation infrastructure development, priority land acquisition, recreation planning, feasibility studies, and NEPA support.

### ORI GOALS:

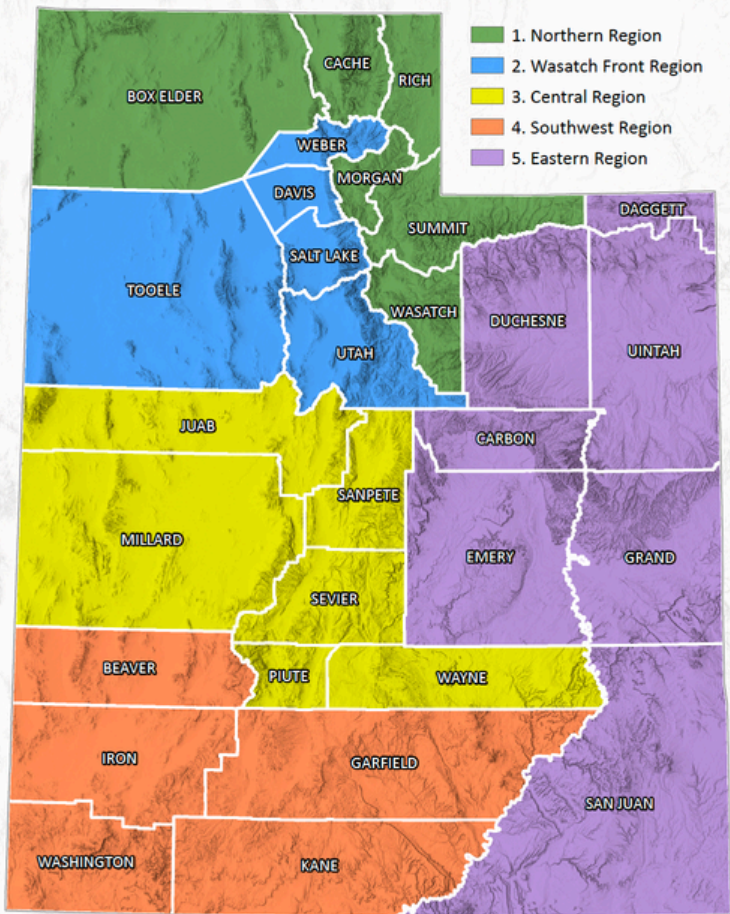
**Goal:** To create collaborative spaces which foster positive connections between stakeholders, strengthen community and regional communication, and better plan for small to large-scale recreation projects.

**Goal:** To establish and leverage Regional Recreation Councils (RRC) to create and implement regional long-range outdoor recreation plans.

**Goal:** To utilize Regional Recreation Councils and regional long-range plans to inform strategic, locally vetted, and regionally significant investment decisions for outdoor recreation infrastructure improvements to ensure alignment with the Utah Strategic Outdoor Recreation Plan.

### ORI REGIONS

Utah Outdoor Recreation Initiative Regions



### WHAT IS A REGIONAL RECREATION COUNCIL?

The ORI Regional Recreation Councils are made up of two parts: the **ranking council** and the **general council**.

The **ranking council** members come from:

- Utah League of Cities and Towns
- Utah Association of Counties
- County Tourism Departments
- Association of Governments
- At-large seats

The ranking council makes the final determination on project rankings to be submitted for funding to the Utah Outdoor Adventure Commission.

The **general councils** use a big-tent approach to bring diverse stakeholders together to determine funding priorities through an annual planning workshop. Members may submit projects for funding, offer partnerships, and contribute to the important discussions affecting recreation in the area.

The general council is a crucial part in the preliminary project rankings as well as establishing the priorities for the ranking council's funding recommendations.

## ORI PROGRAM PRIORITIES

The ORI program has established the following priorities as evaluation standards for funding:

- Utah Outdoor Recreation Strategic Plan Alignment
- Significant Scope
- Benefit to Local Utah Communities
- Addresses Overcrowding in Recreational Areas
- Addresses the Underserved Communities
- Cross-Jurisdictional
- Addresses Backlogged Maintenance
- Shovel-Ready Projects

## ELIGIBLE PROJECT TYPES

While each year determines specific regional priorities, ORI projects should also meet general requirements to be eligible:

- Projects that exceed or are ineligible for the DOR's grant maximums.
- New construction of outdoor recreation infrastructure.
- Upgrades of outdoor recreation infrastructure.
- Replacement of or structural improvements to outdoor recreation infrastructure.
- Acquisition of land, a right-of-way, or easement used in relation to outdoor recreation infrastructure.
- Providing access from state highways to outdoor recreation infrastructure.
- Costs associated with bringing new construction or upgrades of regionally significant outdoor recreation infrastructure into environmental compliance.

## WHO CAN APPLY?

- Municipalities
- State Agencies
- Federal Agencies
- Public Education Institutions
- Nonprofits
- Tribal Governments

## PLANNING SUPPORT

Unless determined to be a regional priority, all planning requests will be submitted to the Outdoor Recreation Planning Assistance (ORPA) Program.

Contact Emily Meadows at [emeadows@utah.gov](mailto:emeadows@utah.gov)

## LONG RANGE PLANNING STRATEGY

The Division of Outdoor Recreation (DOR) is developing a 10+ year strategy with local communities to guide future Outdoor Recreation Initiative (ORI) investments. Think of this as a roadmap for outdoor infrastructure similar to long-range transportation planning, designed to maintain and improve the experience for residents and visitors alike.

The pilot effort is underway in the Central Region, covering Juab, Millard, Sanpete, Sevier, Piute, and Wayne Counties.

Year	Region Plan	Status
2025-2026	Central Region	In Progress
2026-2027	Northern Region	Funded
2026-2027	Southwest Region	Funded
2027-2028	Eastern Region	Unfunded
2027-2028	Wasatch Front Region	Unfunded

## CONTACT US!

For more information to learn how to get involved in the ORI Program visit our [website](#) or send us an email at [outdoorteam@utah.gov](mailto:outdoorteam@utah.gov).



## ORI PROJECTS

Scan the QR code to see a map of previously funded ORI projects.