

## **The I-70 Mountain Corridor Core Values Healthy Environment**

*A healthy environment requires taking responsibility to preserve, restore, and enhance natural resources and ecosystems.*

To maintain a healthy environment, it is paramount to know the environment, the terrain, and the ecosystems; how they interact; and what makes these natural systems healthy. Philosophically, a healthy environment should sustain itself. Human intervention in maintenance should be minimal, and mitigation should restore natural systems to a level that is self sustaining.

The I-70 Mountain Corridor passes through three national forests and some of Colorado's most pristine mountain environment. The corridor is home to many animals, including elk, mule deer, big horn sheep, and threatened and endangered species such as the lynx. These animals live along the corridor and many migrate across I-70. The corridor crosses over and provides access to a number of streams, lakes, and riparian habitat areas. The unique balance between preserving, restoring, and enhancing the natural resources and ecosystem must be measured as alternatives to improve the I-70 Mountain Corridor are considered.

The following key resource areas should be considered when developing and analyzing I-70 Mountain Corridor alternatives to determine whether alternatives are compatible with a healthy environment:

- Biological Resources
- Climate and Air Quality
- Hazardous Materials
- Wetlands and Water Resources
- Wildlife

For more environmental data from the Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement, see the Interactive Map.

The Evaluation Guidance details how I-70 Mountain Corridor alternatives will be evaluated. The Alternative Evaluation Guidance documents how well an alternative is able to preserve, restore, and enhance natural resources and ecosystems. Criteria are provided for use at each level of alternative analysis.

During the I-70 Mountain Corridor Context Sensitive Solution Workshops, the stakeholders developed a list of critical issues to be considered during all future work on the corridor. The stakeholders further provided a list of healthy environment strategies that should be considered when developing and refining alternatives.