

2025-26 ANNUAL REPORT



TABLE OF CONTENTS

A LETTER FROM CHANCELLOR JEREMY HAEFNER | **4**

A NOTE FROM STU HALSALL | **5**

PART ONE
INTO THE WILD: STUDENT PROGRAMS AND EXPERIENCES | **7**

PART TWO
GATEWAY TO POSSIBILITY: ACADEMIC PROGRAMS AND RESEARCH | **33**

PART THREE
LAYING NEW GROUND: CAPITAL PROJECTS | **47**

PART FOUR
SHARED GROUND: COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS | **65**

PART FIVE
THE FULL PICTURE: NUMBERS | **75**

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING THE KMC | **82**



LETTER FROM CHANCELLOR JEREMY HAEFNER

Dear [redacted]

Your generous support continues to unlock transformative opportunities for University of Denver students, extending their learning, growth, and sense of possibility well beyond the classroom. As another successful academic year draws to a close, I am pleased to share the James C. Kennedy Mountain Campus Annual Report. I hope you will see in its pages your far-reaching impact and the significant experiences your generosity makes possible.

The KMC is far more than a retreat center — it is a dynamic, accessible, and immersive environment where DU students put their learning into practice while cultivating resilience, self-awareness, and holistic well-being. Backdropped by the beautiful Rocky Mountain West, students confront challenges that broaden their perspectives and shape character. They grow personally, academically, and professionally; forge lifelong relationships with their peers and mentors; and develop leadership skills they will carry back to campus and into their future careers.

Your commitment to DU reflects a shared belief in the promise of DU's 4D Experience and its power to shape students' lives. Through your support, thousands of students can engage more deeply with this distinctive approach to learning and growth, drawing on those lessons well beyond their time at DU.

Thank you for your generosity and vision for DU's future. Because of you, our students are not simply succeeding; they are becoming principled, resilient leaders and engaged difference-makers, prepared to make a meaningful impact in their communities and beyond.

With gratitude,

Jeremy Haefner
Chancellor
University of Denver

A NOTE FROM STU HALSALL

Dear Mr. Kennedy,

It is my privilege to share the 2025–26 James C. Kennedy Mountain Campus Annual Report, highlighting another exceptional year of innovation, continued progress toward our strategic goals, and expanded opportunities for DU students to build and design careers and lives of purpose.

Through outdoor experiences, leadership summits, academic retreats, and community gatherings, the KMC has become a true touchstone for the DU community — a place where students develop new skills, deepen friendships, strengthen their well-being and character, and connect with Colorado's extraordinary natural environment. This vision of offering students a fully integrated urban and mountain experience remains at the heart of the KMC's purpose and continues to guide our progress.

Over the past four years, over 7,500 members of the DU community have experienced the KMC's 730 acres in ways that are both transformative and enduring. A major priority this past year was increasing access and belonging. Through the launch of The Great Escape, we piloted an open-access model that invites students to campus outside of structured programming. These weekends have significantly expanded awareness, participation, and student ownership of the campus, advancing our commitment to inclusive access and student-centered learning.

This report also highlights meaningful innovations in programming, including our first Study Weekend, which transformed the campus into a supportive academic retreat during a critical time in the term. With additional open weekends already planned for the coming year, we are excited to continue evolving how the KMC serves students — meeting them where they are and offering new pathways for engagement, reflection, and growth.

First Ascent continues to stand as one of the most impactful and unifying traditions at the KMC. This year marks a significant milestone: for the first time, all four undergraduate classes have participated in First Ascent, creating a shared foundation that connects students across their entire DU journey. The program has also grown in intentionality, with the integration of a more robust Outdoor Leadership Lab that prepares student leaders to guide others, foster community, and contribute meaningfully to campus life.

Behind these student experiences is a strong and disciplined operational foundation. Thanks to your leadership and generosity, we have made substantial progress in infrastructure, safety, and long-term planning. Major investments in water rights, water storage, and environmental stewardship are underway to ensure sustainability for generations to come. At the same time, we continue to advance safety systems, enhance outdoor recreation opportunities, and strengthen our operational model to support increased access and utilization of the KMC.

Our path to long-term sustainability remains clear and focused. We continue to make meaningful progress on two complementary strategies: growing the endowment and expanding auxiliary revenue through thoughtfully designed programs, partnerships, and experiences that increase year-round utilization of the KMC. At the same time, we recognize there is still important work ahead to fully realize a durable financial model that will allow the KMC to thrive independently while maintaining exceptional quality and access.

As we reflect on this year of meaningful progress, it is evident that the KMC is not simply a place — it is an experience that shapes who our students become. It embodies DU's commitment to the 4D experience, environmental stewardship, and community connection and belonging.

Thank you for your extraordinary partnership and continued support. With your help, we are building something truly distinctive — an enduring resource that will enrich the lives of DU students and the broader community for generations to come.

With deep gratitude,

Stu Halsall

Stu Halsall
Vice Chancellor, Student Affairs
University of Denver





PART ONE

Into *The Wild*

Student Programs
and Experiences



Across the KMC's 730 acres in Red Feather Lakes, Colorado, University of Denver students enjoy immersive, high-impact, accessible outdoor experiences in the beautiful Rocky Mountain West. At the KMC, students build character; forge social and professional connections; learn new skills; and cultivate academic, emotional, and physical well-being.

There's something for everyone. Whether students want a restorative, restful retreat from campus life or a high-adrenaline adventure in Colorado's rugged landscape, they can find it at the KMC. Transportation, accommodations, gear rentals, and expert instruction are included in every experience, eliminating barriers to participation.









INTRODUCING BASECAMP

Adventure begins with the right gear — and a clear pathway to experience it. In 2025, the KMC and DU Outdoors launched Basecamp, a gear-rental and recreation hub on DU's main campus designed to serve as a central access point and gateway to outdoor experiences at the KMC and beyond. By lowering barriers to entry, Basecamp connects students directly to the people, programs, and landscapes that define the KMC experience.

With support from DU's Campus Recreation and Well-Being department, along with a generous $90,000 grant from Undergraduate Student Government, Basecamp officially opened in January 2026. The program provides students with safe, affordable access to skiing, snowshoeing, biking, climbing, and camping equipment, preparing them to fully engage in outdoor programming both on the DU campus and at the KMC.

Since moving into its permanent location at Asbury Avenue and York Street in Denver, Basecamp has seen strong student demand. Ski bus season passes sold out all season; over seven weekends, 400 students used this resource to access ski trips with their friends and peers, creating a direct pipeline for students traveling from campus to the mountains. After transitioning to cycling and warm-weather gear in April 2026, the program has already served more than 575 students, many of whom took their first steps toward deeper engagement with the KMC and year-round outdoor recreation in Colorado.







As a student-run organization, Basecamp offers meaningful employment opportunities that cultivate technical expertise and leadership development. Student staff play a vital role in supporting both Denver campus operations and the KMC-based gear hub, where participants receive equipment, guidance, and instruction upon arrival in Red Feather Lakes. Through hands-on training as trail and activity guides, students gain advanced professional experience while helping create a seamless transition from the DU campus to the KMC. Together, Basecamp and the KMC function as a unified ecosystem and powerful launchpad for student engagement, student leadership, outdoor exploration, and career development.

By strengthening the KMC's partnership with DU's Campus Recreation and Well-Being department — now serving as Basecamp's operational and financial backbone — the program has created a more integrated and cohesive student experience. This collaboration has brought DU's recreational programs into closer alignment, enhanced leadership training for DU Outdoors leaders, and, for the first time, secured student leadership representation for outdoor recreation on the Club Sports Advisory Committee (a key student leadership organization on campus). Most importantly, it has positioned Basecamp as the DU campus-based entry point into the broader KMC experience.

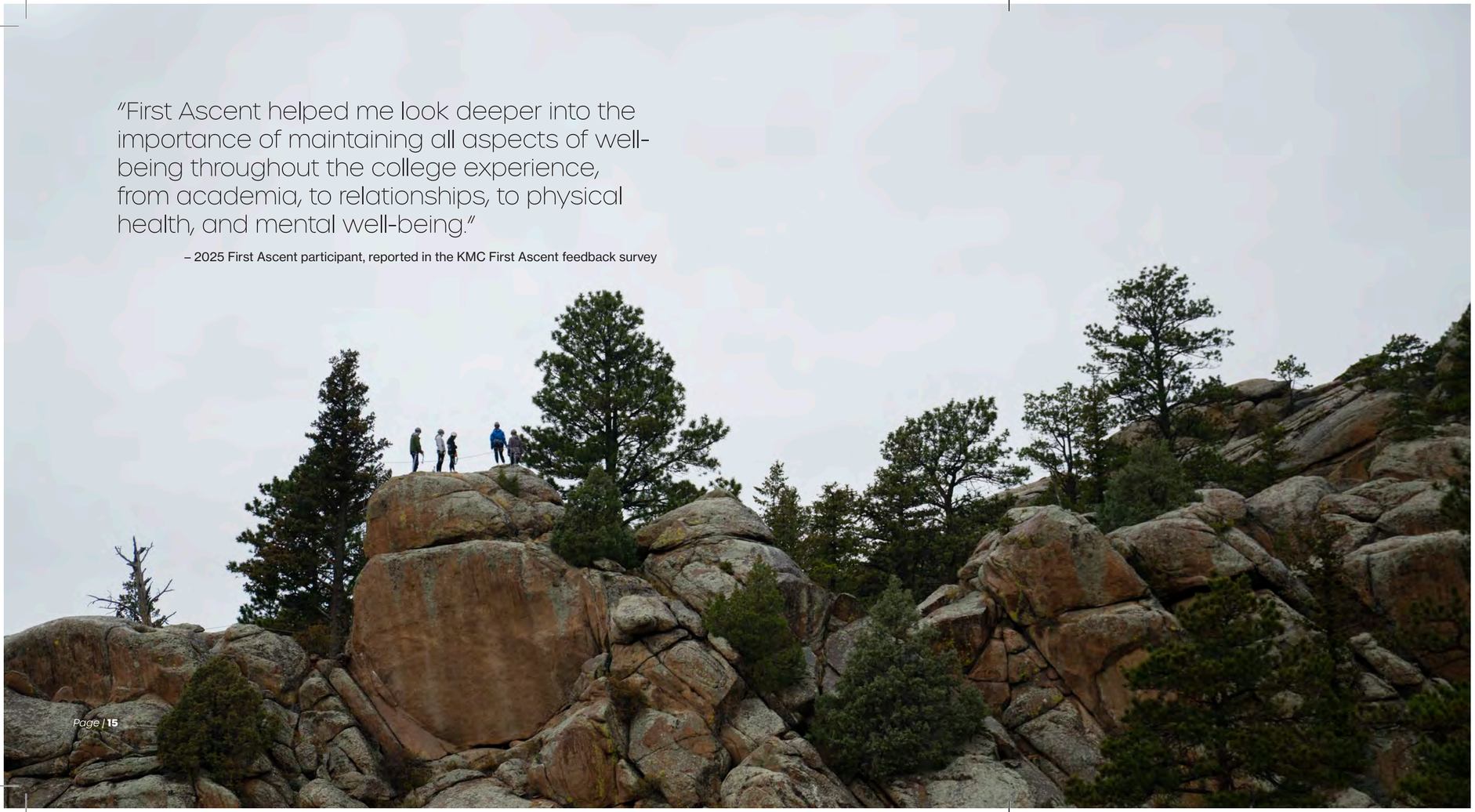


Basecamp partners with a range of student organizations that engage DU students with the KMC on an annual basis, including:

- Alpine Club
- Climbing Club
- Cycling Club
- Fly Fishing Club
- Freeride Ski Team Club
- Kayaking Club
- Skiing Club

"First Ascent helped me look deeper into the importance of maintaining all aspects of well-being throughout the college experience, from academia, to relationships, to physical health, and mental well-being."

– 2025 First Ascent participant, reported in the KMC First Ascent feedback survey



First Ascent: The Trailhead for New DU Students

First Ascent at the KMC anchors DU's first-year Discoveries Orientation experience, providing new students with a memorable, meaningful, and transformative start to their college journey. During the first several weeks of the fall quarter, new students travel to the KMC to participate in structured experiential activities including challenge courses, guided hikes, and community campfires that foster connection and belonging.

In fall 2025, 668 students participated in First Ascent, returning to campus energized, with increased confidence and stronger connections with their peers. In fall 2025, all four undergraduate classes at DU had, for the first time, participated in the First Ascent program, marking a significant milestone in building a more connected student body.

Many students report that friendships formed during First Ascent remain some of their closest throughout their college experience.

First Ascent trips are led by 4D peer mentors and DU Outdoors student staff trained as the KMC guides, activity leaders, instructors, and peer counselors. While the KMC has long provided opportunities for students to complete training and earn certifications, 2025 marked our most significant advancement to date.

Driven by strong student interest and commitment, the KMC staffed the First Ascent program with six highly trained 4D peer mentors and six DU Outdoors student employees, eliminating the need for external professionals. In addition to supporting their peers and contributing to the campus community, these student leaders developed highly transferrable leadership skills.

Notable 2025–26 Program Enhancements

- Integrated 12 DU Outdoors student leaders into activity facilitation
- Reduced transportation costs by more than 50% through new the KMC fleet vehicles and Emergency Services Building
- Expanded accessibility by introducing a designated “well-being oasis” for quiet and reflective activities, particularly supporting neurodiverse students
- Increased via ferrata offerings to meet growing student demand







My First Ascent Experience...
(Agreement Rating)

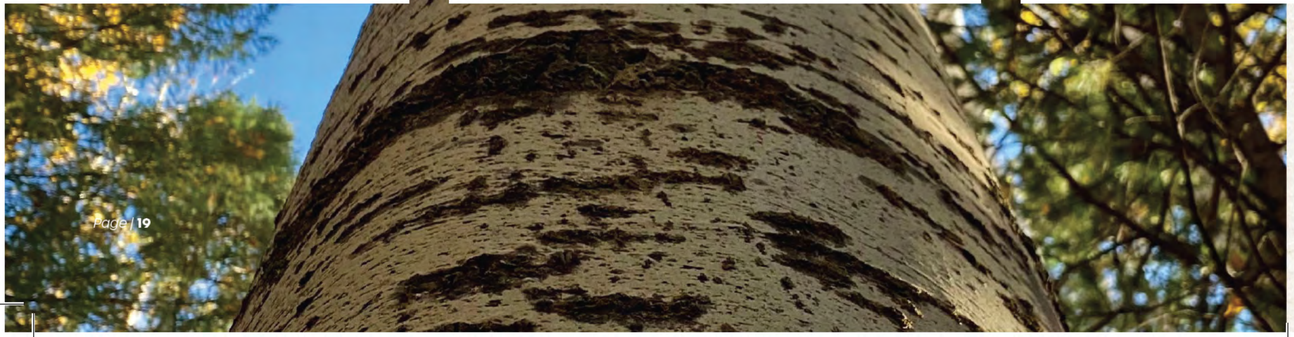
	Fall 2024	Fall 2025
Helped me build new connections	94%	94%
Encouraged me to step outside of my comfort zone	95%	94%
Inspired me to reflect	79%	79%
Helped me develop a greater understanding of what’s important to me	79%	**82%**
Gave me a fresh perspective on my education and life experience	75%	**84%**
Helped me identify at least one way of applying skills or knowledge to other areas of my personal, academic, or professional life	75%	**84%**











First Ascent Early Access

In response to strong student demand, the KMC introduced a second pre-orientation First Ascent session in fall 2025, building on the successful pilot of 2024. This early access program mirrors the traditional First Ascent experience, with one key distinction: students travel to the KMC before the academic year begins. This option provides incoming students with greater scheduling flexibility while preserving the connection, confidence-building, and sense of belonging that define First Ascent. The 2025 program matched the strong outcomes of the pilot year, signaling its value as a lasting component of DU's first-year experience.





Outdoor Leadership Lab

Over the past year, the KMC has strengthened its peer-supported learning environment by expanding the student leadership model at the core of its programs. The Outdoor Leadership Lab — the training and development program for the KMC student employees and mentors — served more students than ever before in 2025–26, preparing them to lead with confidence, care, and technical skills.

Through the lab, students train as the KMC guides, activity leaders, sports instructors, and cabin attendants. In these roles, they support First Ascent and an expanding portfolio of year-round programming, helping to create the welcoming, student-centered experience that defines the KMC.

The Outdoor Leadership Lab expands the constellation of peer mentors available to new students while providing experienced students with hands-on leadership opportunities, job training, and professional skill development. In this way, the KMC is not only a place where students are supported — it's also a place where students learn to support others.





The Great Escape: Opening Doors, Increasing Access

In 2025–26, the KMC piloted The Great Escape program to expand access to the KMC for DU students of all experience levels. Through open-house weekends, students were invited to visit the KMC outside of highly structured programs, creating new entry points for those who may not identify as traditional outdoor recreation participants.

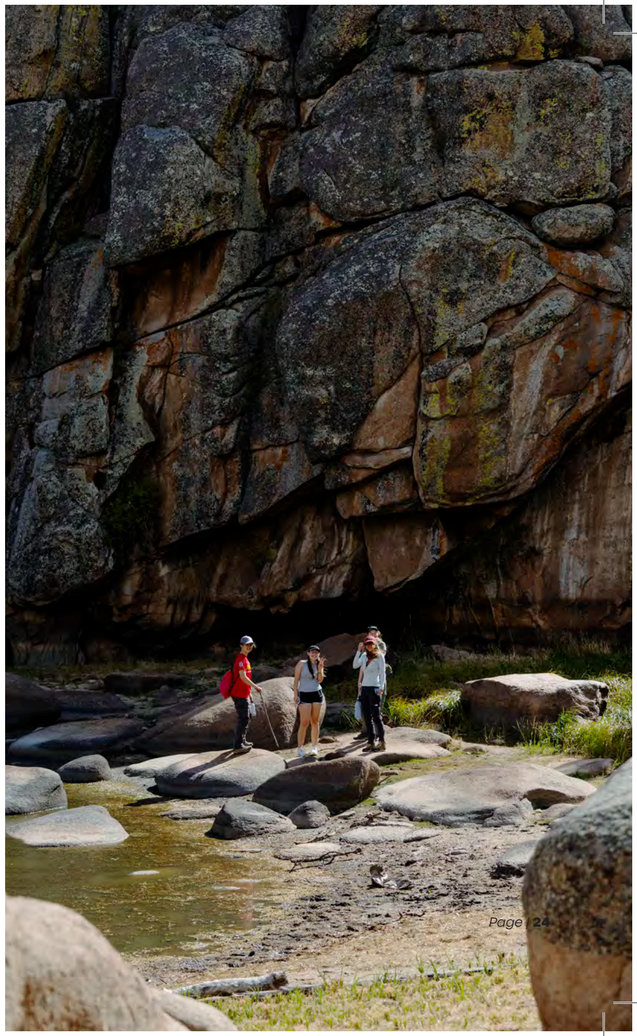
These weekends reinforced an important truth: the KMC is not a niche experience reserved for serious outdoor enthusiasts, but a broadly accessible one — inclusive, restorative, and welcoming to all students.

The pilot brought 80 students to the KMC, demonstrating clear demand for this type of flexible, low-barrier programming. Students could choose from casual, community-oriented offerings such as exercise classes, guided hikes, and special-topic sessions on wildflowers or wilderness medicine, or they could simply spend time relaxing and connecting in the natural beauty of the KMC and Red Feather Lakes.

Building on this momentum, the KMC will host six open weekends in 2026 – 27, offering varying levels of structured programming. As student interest grows, the KMC aims to expand the model further, including the potential for a dedicated retreat for DU's significant graduate student population, as well as collaboration with DU Campus Recreation and Wellness to offer fitness classes, yoga workshops, and instructor training opportunities.







Study. Play. Rest. Repeat.

A highlight of The Great Escape pilot was the KMC's inaugural Study Weekend in winter 2026, designed to help students study effectively, recharge, and enter finals week with confidence.

Across the KMC, familiar spaces were reimagined to support both focus and well-being: the dining hall became a welcoming coffeehouse-style environment with soft music and a central fire; the Bucksbaum Outdoor Gateway transformed into a quiet, library-like study zone; and the cabins were adapted as collaborative workspaces for discussion and connection.

A nominal fee ensured a reservation for students, making the weekend accessible to any student and maximizing participation. Students arrived energized by the change of scenery and the opportunity to engage in a thoughtfully designed environment where they could read, write, collaborate, and, at a day's end, unwind in the natural beauty of the KMC.

More than 80 DU students participated, underscoring the demand for flexible, low-pressure programming that complements students' academic lives. Building on the pilot's success, the KMC plans to offer two Study Weekends per quarter — one ahead of midterms and another before finals.

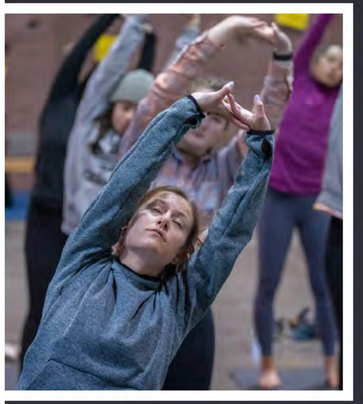






"I am so glad I came. I had such an amazing time! We went hammocking at night to stargaze. The next morning, we did yoga, which helped relieve a lot of the stress I was carrying. We also went on a hike! 10/10 experience! Thank you, DU!"

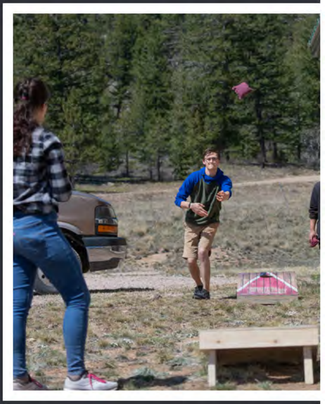
– 2025 Study Weekend participant, reported in feedback survey

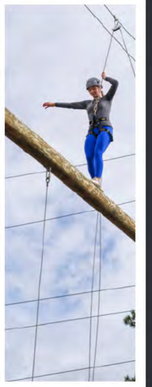
















DU Students Thrive!

Well-being practices are integrated throughout all the KMC programming, including morning yoga, contemplative sunrise gatherings, meditative hikes, and reflective experiences that foster personal grounding. These well-attended activities align with DU's 4D Experience, which emphasizes a set of key building blocks to maximize each student's educational experience while also laying a foundation for lifelong learning, engagement, and thriving. The KMC provides a place where students can rest, recharge, learn, and connect with others in meaningful and positive ways.





"The KMC Leadership Summit was an incredible opportunity to engage with a multitude of student leaders across campus. It allowed me to broaden my perspective of issues other student leaders are facing, which allowed me to feel more confident working with them throughout the rest of the year."

– Noura Ali Abid (Class of 2027), 2025 Summit participant, former vice president of Undergraduate Student Government, 4D peer mentor

Student Leadership Summit

In August 2025, the KMC hosted the Student Leadership Summit, bringing over 100 student leaders and their advisors to the KMC for a two-day experience.

Students represented Undergraduate Student Government, Graduate Student Government, Fraternity and Sorority Life, and Club Sports, along with cohorts of 4D peer mentors and DU Outdoors leaders. Through facilitated discussions, workshops, and collaborative sessions, these interdisciplinary leaders developed strategies and shared plans for the year ahead.

The Summit also featured a lunch with the Chancellor's Cabinet, providing a unique opportunity for students to engage directly with university leadership while strengthening connections across campus communities.







Locke + Co. Launches Whiskey Using The KMC Aspen Wood

This year, alumni-owned Denver distillery Locke + Co. Distilling partnered with DU to create a limited-edition bourbon blend whiskey. Aged for five years in oak barrels and finished with aspen wood from the KMC, the bourbon blend whiskey offers a distinctive flavor profile that reflects Colorado's natural character.

DU alumni and friends were able to sample the bourbon blend whiskey at DU's 2025 Homecoming tailgate, and it is now available at select retailers throughout the Denver area.



PART TWO

Gateway *to Possibility*

Academic Programs
and Research





The KMC Design Lab: Gateway to Possibility

The KMC Design Lab, developed in partnership with DU's Office of Teaching and Learning, is transforming how faculty integrate place-based, experiential learning into their courses. Serving as a key gateway to the KMC for DU's world-class faculty and researchers, the lab provides structured, supportive pathways for designing innovative, high-impact learning experiences.

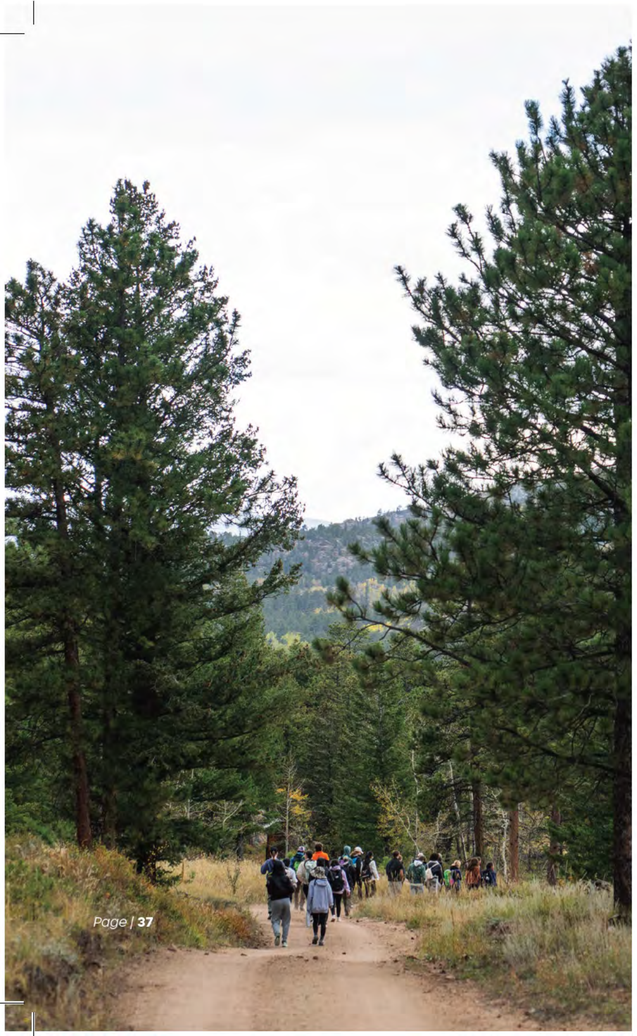
Through a three-part program focused on the KMC immersion, evidence-based course design, and on-site implementation, faculty gain the vision and tools to translate ideas into actionable curricula. Early results demonstrate strong interest and engagement, with 10 participants selected for the inaugural cohort, including four faculty currently developing new courses.

The Design Lab reduces barriers to the KMC use by streamlining communication, clarifying logistics, and offering personalized support. Just as importantly, it shifts faculty engagement from broad awareness to direct course integration, enabling the creation of place-based experiences that deepen student learning.

By fostering cross-campus collaboration and empowering faculty innovation, the KMC Design Lab strengthens the KMC's role as a dynamic academic resource unique to DU. It also advances the University's capacity to deliver transformational experiential education in a setting that invites inquiry, connection, and discovery.







Course Collaborations

New! “Spanish Language Immersion”

Launching Summer 2026

The College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences, in collaboration with the Center for World Languages and Cultures, is launching a new Spanish Immersion program at the KMC. Participants may choose to earn academic credit through an accelerated course or take part in a continuing education immersion retreat.

This residential program combines intensive language instruction with community living, cultural engagement, and wellness-focused activities. Through daily practice, structured coursework, and immersive experiences, participants strengthen their Spanish proficiency while learning in the distinctive the KMC setting.

“Conservation Biology”

This spring, 17 students visited the KMC to conduct field work with Anna Sher, PhD, professor in the biology department.

Undergraduates in Sher’s Conversation Biology class had been conducting experiments on wildflower propagation in the context of restoration all quarter, and they planted these at the KMC as the final step. Through this experiential learning opportunity, students put their education into action.





“Leading with Collaboration”

In May 2026, 31 students visted the KMC as part of a course taught by Katherine Novak, Daniels College of Business.

This course emphasizes the principles of designing and sustaining high-performing teams, while equipping students with skills in decision-making, conflict resolution, and effective communication. It also addresses contemporary workplace dynamics, including virtual collaboration, self-managed teams, and innovation in team settings. Through this curriculum, students gain practical competencies in leadership, collaboration, and group effectiveness that prepare them for modern organizational contexts.





“Marketing Professional Leadership and Development II”

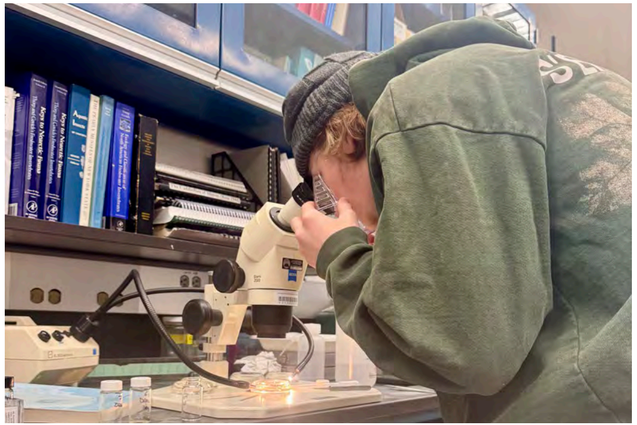
In May 2026, 22 graduate students from Daniels College of Business visited the KMC for a leadership retreat.

The Professional Development and Leadership sequence at the DU’s Daniels College of Business is a three-course, one-credit series embedded within the graduate-level marketing program, designed to support career readiness through experiential learning. Students engage in workshops and immersion experiences while also benefiting from mentorship by marketing practitioners who guide their career transitions and personal brand development.

“My masters-level Marketing Professional Leadership and Development II course visited the KMC in early May to focus on team building, communication and conflict resolution, resilience, critical thinking, and collaboration.

I loved seeing the students immerse themselves wholeheartedly in the Colorado experience, demonstrating firsthand why experiential learning environments can reshape us, as a team, and as individuals. It was a great trip, with terrific feedback from students.”

– Andrea Lashnits, adjunct professor and executive-in-residence, Department of Marketing, Daniels College of Business





Conservation at the KMC: The Sher Lab Is Improving Land, Soil, and Air

The KMC functions as a living laboratory for Anna Sher, PhD from DU's Department of Biological Sciences. Sher and her team of student researchers are studying Colorado's at-risk ecosystems with the goal of developing and implementing sustainable restoration and conservation methods.

This work gives students more than field experience. It prepares them for purpose-driven careers by deepening their understanding of the natural world and how to protect it.

"We are monitoring plants, animals, and fungi associated with the South Lone Pine Creek that runs through the KMC to determine the health of the system and how it responds to restoration," says Sher. "We recently completed a benthic macro-invertebrate survey, a fancy way of saying that we go into the stream with waders and nets to sample the little critters that live in the sediment. These macro-invertebrate are excellent biological indicators of the health of a stream."

Research at the KMC carries significance far beyond the campus itself. The South Lone Pine Creek that runs through is a component of the entire Cache la Poudre River Watershed, which provides critical habitat for wild turkey, moose, black bear, mountain lion, and numerous other species. This project, which is in collaboration with the Larimer Conservation District, also provides an opportunity to examine environmental pressures that are reshaping ecosystems worldwide.

"The KMC is a small example of two global environmental crises we are facing all around the world: climate change and biodiversity loss," says Arthur Lima, a PhD student working in Sher's lab.

Lima, who is completing his doctoral studies at DU with support from the Fulbright program, also serves as a bridge between the KMC and the international community. As a contributor to the seventh edition of the United Nations' Global Environment Outlook report and a speaker at UNEA-7 and the Youth Environment Assembly in Nairobi, he helps bring DU's research into conversations around the global environment.

At the KMC, Lima also mentors undergraduate students interested in similar paths, encouraging them to become leaders and difference-makers in conservation, advocacy, and the life sciences. For both Sher and Lima, fostering curiosity and environmental responsibility is central to their work. Through immersive, hands-on learning experiences, the KMC enables DU students to engage directly with the landscapes, questions, and challenges shaping the future of conservation.

"The most important initiatives are to recruit and support students so that they become leaders of the future," says Sher.







Andy and Barbara Taylor Upper Camp

As academic use of the KMC continues to grow, so does the need for spaces that can support field-based teaching and research. With support from DU Forward funding, the KMC recently created and updated a classroom at the Andy and Barbara Taylor Upper Camp to better enable field studies and research, including expanding space, storage, and ways to keep equipment clean and sterile.

We also stocked the classroom with new materials, including those required for the South Lone Pine Creek restoration project: waders, sampling nets, and other equipment that will allow students to take samples from the natural areas on campus and research them in the classroom. Together, these updates make the site more functional for hands-on learning and fieldwork, enabling research teams, such as The Sher Lab, to work more effectively at the KMC.



Going for Baroque: The Brandenburg Project

In April 2026, students and faculty involved in DU's Brandenburg Project participated in a weekend retreat at the KMC, designed to replicate the immersive conditions of professional music performance in a natural, distraction-free setting.

The Brandenburg Project — a collaboration between Zoe Weiss, PhD, assistant professor of musicology at the Lamont School of Music, and Colorado College faculty member Lidia Chang, PhD, — features historically informed performances of Bach's "Brandenburg Concertos" played on baroque instruments.

Unlike traditional student ensembles that rehearse once or twice a week, the KMC retreat offered concentrated rehearsal time, enabling students to engage deeply with both the repertoire and one another. This extended format proved transformative: students stepped away from the routines of campus and modern performance habits to fully immerse themselves in baroque technique, building fluency, confidence, and stylistic authenticity.

The retreat also fostered meaningful social interaction, strengthening trust and cohesion within the ensemble — an essential component of effective musical collaboration. As a result, the group made significant artistic progress in a short period, supported by the focus, space, and shared experience that the KMC provides.

The KMC staff played a vital role in the retreat's success, offering flexible, responsive support throughout both the planning process and the on-site experience. The KMC setting further enhanced the experience, providing an environment conducive to both concentration and creative inspiration.

"This experience tangibly improved the quality of our performances in early May," said Weiss. "I would jump at the chance to bring the students back to the KMC for more joyful music-making."

– Zoe Weiss, PhD, assistant professor of musicology at the Lamont School of Music



PART THREE

Laying *New Ground*

Capital Projects



The KMC's academic, recreational, and student development programs are built on a strong physical foundation. The following capital projects strengthen the infrastructure that underpins safety, property resilience, sustainability and conservation, and experiential learning across the campus. Together, these investments not only support long-term growth but also expand how students, faculty, and community partners experience and benefit from this extraordinary property.



Project #1: New Emergency Services Building

With generous support from Mr. Kennedy, the KMC completed construction of a new Emergency Services Building in October 2025, a critical investment in campus safety and regional emergency preparedness. Developed in partnership with the Glacier View Fire Department, the facility strengthens on-site wildfire response, evacuation readiness, and coordinated emergency operations.

The building houses essential firefighting equipment and two dedicated evacuation buses, enabling full, independent evacuation of the KMC at maximum occupancy. Strategically located for rapid deployment, the project also includes a completed helicopter landing zone at the Andy and Barbara Taylor Upper Camp to support emergency response efforts.

Together, these enhancements improve response times, strengthen partnerships with local emergency services, and extend benefits to the broader Red Feather Lakes community.

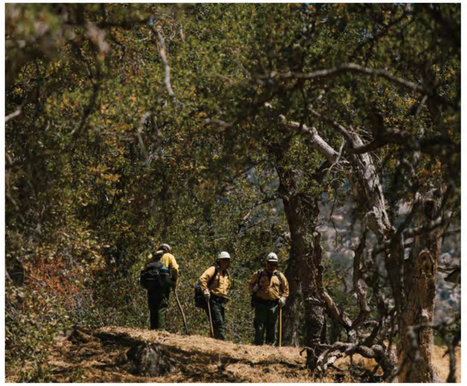




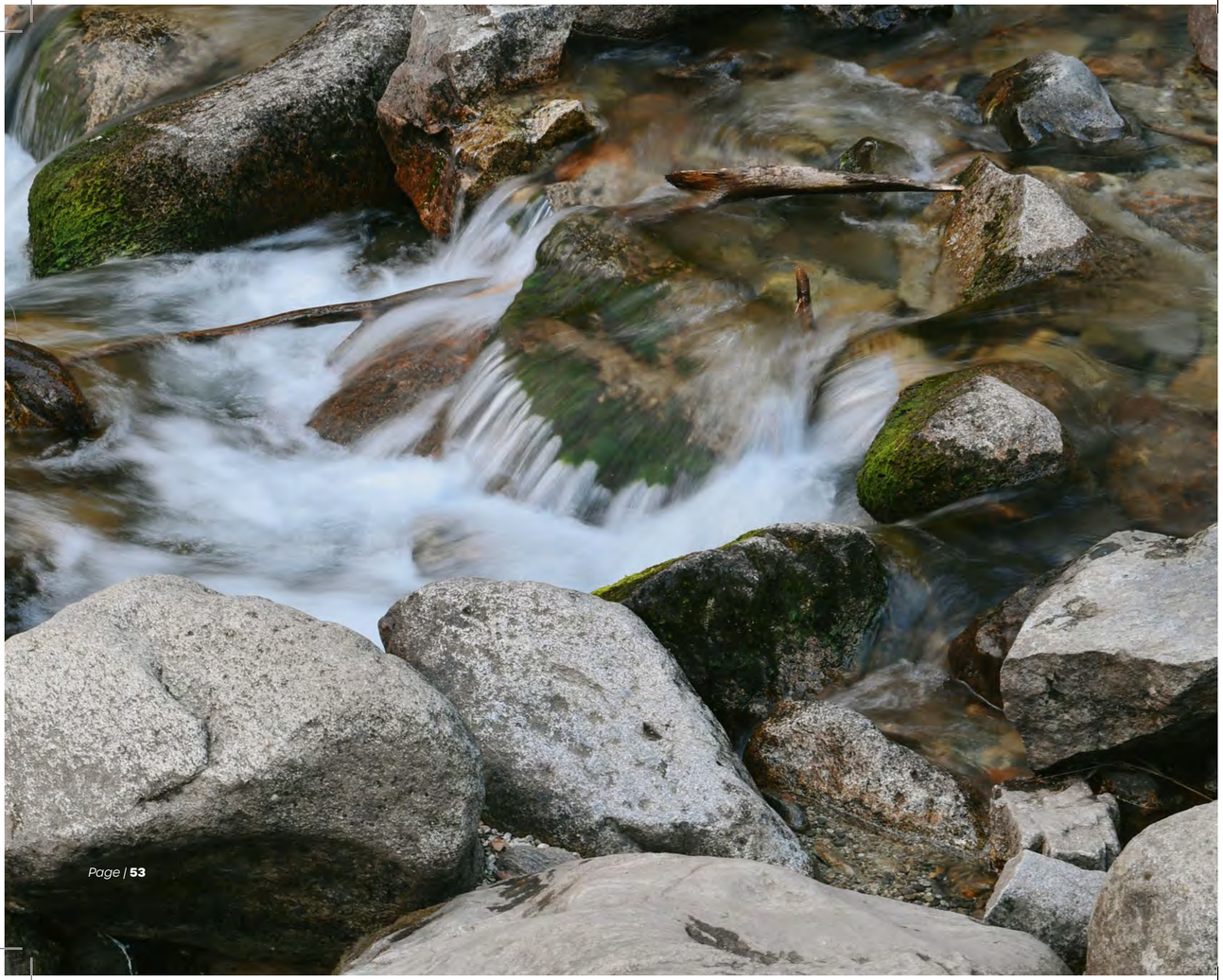
Table 1: Emergency Services Building Expense Summary

Budget: $1,600,380

Work Completed:	
Glacier View Fire Department and Larimer County Coordination	Development Agreement Addendum Prepared
Fire Equipment Allocation: Fire Engine, Fire Tender Truck, Wildland Fire Unit	Building Design, Sizing, and Envelope Completed and Procured (Pre-Tariff)
Cushing Terrell Hired as Architect of Record	Larimer County Special Permit Review Completed, Including Community Approval
James C. Kennedy Mountain Campus Location Identified	Final Larimer County Department Permit Stamps
Site Survey, Geotechnical, and Engineering Submittals	Final Budget Approved
Evacuation Buses and Passenger Van Vehicles Purchased	Emergency Services Building Construction
Staff CDL Training	Glacier View Fire Department MOU and Occupancy Determination
Helicopter Landing	Project Closeout
Zone Construction	

Funds Spent:	**Funds Estimated to Complete:**	**Remaining Balance:**
$1,636,099	**$7,000**	**($42,719)**

As we completed the Larimer County Special Review process, we have incurred additional costs for the project due to increased site development to address water runoff and erosion control. This was not part of our original budget for this project. We will continue to work to create savings within the project to reduce the current overage. Revenue funds generated by the KMC will cover the differential.



Project #2: Water Rights, Storage Planning, and Reservoir Renovation

With support from Mr. Kennedy, the Larimer Conservation District, and the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), the KMC advanced its comprehensive Water Rights and Storage Plan to secure long-term water access and strengthen campus resilience. This work identified and prioritized key infrastructure projects, moving several projects through design, engineering, early implementation phases, and project completion.

At the center of this effort was the Magic Sky Reservoir renovation, with construction completed in December 2025. The improvements will expands water storage capacity, supports water augmentation, and enhances system reliability for campus operations. Planning is also underway for enhancements to Cliff Lake, including hydrological studies and site design to improve sustainability and recreational use.

Additional initiatives include the South Lone Pine Creek restoration. Through Mr. Kennedy's generous gift, we secured matching support from the Larimer Conservation District and EQIP. This project is expected to move forward in summer/fall 2026, beginning with significant forestry work to restore habitat and improve long-term ecological health.

Together, these efforts secure critical water resources, support ecological restoration, and lay the foundation for future recreational opportunities, ensuring the long-term sustainability and adaptability of the KMC.





Table 2: Water Rights, Storage Planning, and Reservoir Renovation Expense Summary

Budget: $1,944,196

Work Completed:		Work in Progress:	Not Completed:
Water Survey and Site Analysis The KMC Long-Term Plan: Water Infrastructure and Current and Future Water Use Calculations Water Rights Analysis CH.1 Weaver Ditch Design and Engineering Magic Sky Reservoir Dam Analysis: Jurisdictional vs. Non-Jurisdictional Magic Sky Reservoir Design and Engineering Magic Sky Reservoir Construction Drawings	South Lone Pine Creek Aquatics Habitat Analysis South Lone Pine Creek Preliminary Design (Larimer County Conservation District) Magic Sky Reservoir Permit Magic Sky Reservoir Construction	Cliff Lake Hydrology Study (Delayed Due To Drought) Cliff Lake Design and Engineering Grant Funding for South Lone Pine Creek Restoration (Larimer Conservation District) Forestry Work	Cliff Lake Restoration South Lone Pine Creek Restoration
Funds Spent: $1,192,308		**Funds Estimated to Spend: $751,888**	**Remaining Funds *: $751,888**

*Additional funding from the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) will support this project but is not included in the remaining balance.





Project #3: Trail System Restoration and Improvement

The KMC continues to expand its trail development. Designed to support hiking, biking, outdoor education, and personal reflection, the expanded network strengthens student engagement and advances DU's commitment to experiential learning and wellness. The project has already inspired new philanthropic support, with named trails funded by DU parent donors to sustain future expansion.

Complementing this effort, the backcountry yurt now provides a remote classroom, Basecamp, and year-round shelter, enhancing opportunities for immersive learning, recreation, and outdoor programming.

In 2025–26, the KMC completed construction of the mountain bike trail network, expanding opportunities for recreation, learning, and student engagement through DU Outdoors programs.

The new network also enhances the ability of DU's Cycling Club and Mountain Bike Team to recruit riders and host collegiate bike competitions and club practices, adding another distinctive outdoor asset to the KMC experience.

Table 3: Trail System Restoration and Improvement Expense Summary

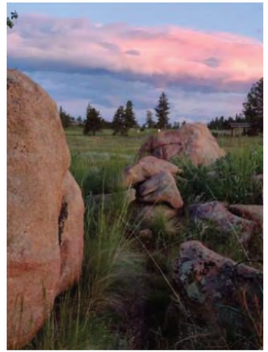
Budget: $869,000

Work Completed:		**Work in Progress:**	**To Complete:**
Phase 1 Trail Research, Design, GIS, and Trail Flagging Completed (Hiking Trails) Trail Building Tools Acquired Trail Building School Program Completed and Trail Test Section Built Phase 2 Trail Research, Design, GIS, and Trail Flagging Complete (Mountain Bike) Trail Equipment Operator Hired and Insured, Associated Trail Rental Equipment Mountain Bike Fleet Acquisition	Phase 1 Trail Construction (Hiking Trails) Phase 1 Infrastructure Procurement (Warming Huts, Benches, etc.) Trail Equipment Procurement Phase 2 Trail Construction (Mountain Biking)	Mini-Excavator Procurement (Trail Maintenance)	Phase 3 Trail Design (Backpacking, Inholding) Action Track Chair Acquisition (ADA Access) Adaptive Cycling Equipment Procurement Trail Signage Mountain Bike Start Area
Funds Spent: $651,572		**Funds Estimated to Spend: $217,428**	**Remaining Funds: $217,428**



Project #4: Schlessman Campground

Construction is underway for the Schlessman Campground, a signature investment by the Schlessman Foundation that will expand access to immersive outdoor experiences at the KMC. Perched above Lost Valley, one of the most visually striking areas on the campus, the campground will offer both drive-in and walk-in sites, along with essential amenities and communal gathering space. Supporting DU Outdoors' broader recreation strategy, the project is designed to activate underutilized areas of the campus while providing students and guests with a flexible, low-impact, "off-the-grid" experience that encourages exploration, connection, and self-directed adventure. Project completion is anticipated in fall 2026.



Project #5: Challenge Course Redesign

Design is underway for a reimagined challenge course, supported by Mr. Kennedy, that will replace aging infrastructure with a modern, integrated system designed for progression, adaptability, and year-round resilience. Spanning the mid-camp and Andy and Barbara Taylor Upper Camp landscapes, the course will guide participants through a sequence of ground-based, transitional, and elevated elements, building skills and confidence in a controlled environment tailored to diverse learning outcomes. As a cornerstone investment in the KMC's Resilience and Thriving in the Outdoors program, this project will expand access to high-impact experiential learning while deepening opportunities for leadership development, connection, and personal growth. Project completion is anticipated in fall 2027.

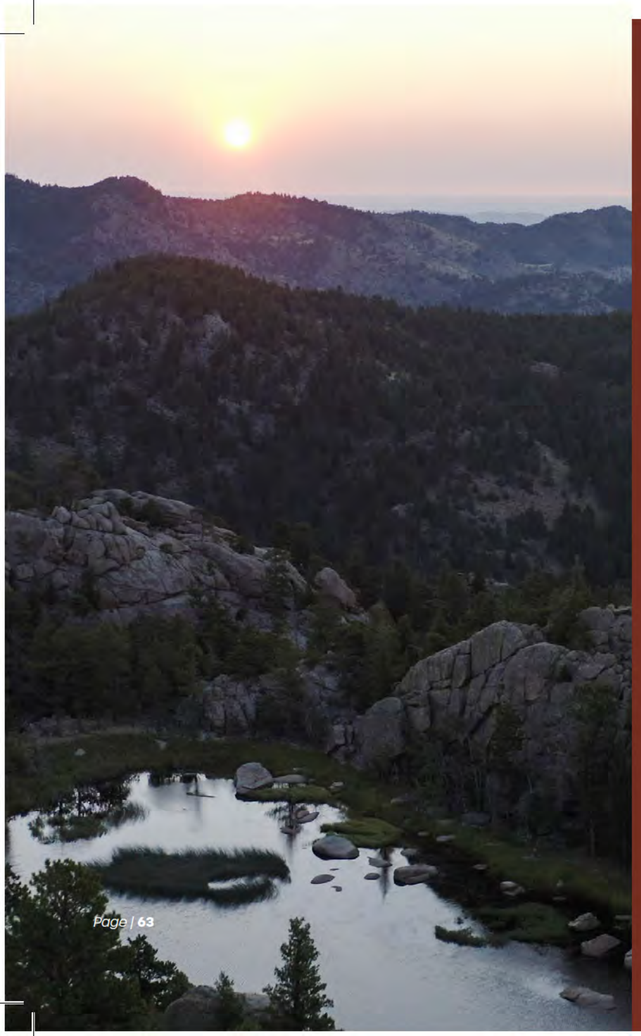




Table 4: Challenge Course Redesign Expense Summary

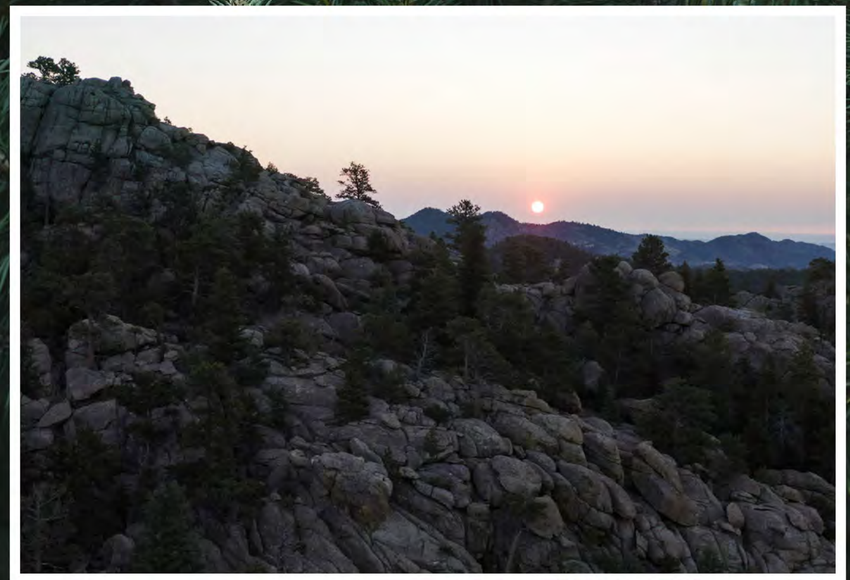
Budget: $925,000

Work Completed:	**Work in Progress:**	**To Complete (Summer/Fall 2027):**	
Phase 1 Project Brief and Scope Initial Outreach with Design/Build Firms Project Budget Opened with the Office of the University Architect	Request for Proposals Process	Challenge Course Site Analysis Challenge Course Design and Engineering Ground-Based Elements Construction Transitional (Mid) Elements Construction	High Elements Construction Equipment Procurement Post-Construction State Inspection and Licensing Staff Training
Funds Spent: $0	**Funds Estimated to Spend: $925,000**	**Remaining Funds: $925,000**	



Project #6: Overlook Lodge

This year, we completed design and feasibility planning for a new lodging and event center at the Andy and Barbara Taylor Upper Camp. With the goals of supporting an expanded suite of academic programs, executive education, alumni engagement, and external events, we conducted a comprehensive design, market, and financial analysis of a 28,000-square-foot facility with up to 50 guest rooms. While we ultimately have decided not to pursue this facility, we are committed to exploring other concepts that serve our needs for overnight accommodations for non-student audiences. We do this while reflecting our ongoing commitment to environmental stewardship of the magnificent setting of the KMC.



PART FOUR

Shared Ground

Community Partnerships





In 2025–26, the KMC advanced two core partnership objectives: expanding access for external youth organizations, particularly those serving at-risk and marginalized populations, and deepening engagement opportunities for DU faculty and staff.

The KMC partnered with organizations such as Royal Family KIDS Camp, which serves children in foster care who have experienced trauma; Camp Indigo Point, which provides affirming outdoor experiences for LGBTQ+ youth; Centennial High School, an alternative high school in Fort Collins; and Boulder Valley School District through its “I Have a Dream” grant program. These partnerships create meaningful opportunities for young people to experience the restorative power of nature, build confidence, and develop a sense of belonging in a safe and supportive environment.

At the same time, the KMC strengthened its role as a resource for the DU community by creating intentional opportunities for faculty and staff to connect, restore, and collaborate. Signature programs such as Faculty and Staff Well-Being in the Wilderness, DU Retirees gatherings, and university-affiliated retreats leveraged the campus as a space for professional development, community building, and restoration. By investing in both external youth partnerships and internal community engagement, the KMC continues to position itself as a vital bridge between DU and the broader community.









Well-Being in the Wilderness

On June 18, 160 faculty and staff participated in Well-Being in the Wilderness, a full-day immersive experience designed to foster community, reduce barriers to outdoor recreation, and promote holistic wellness. With participation costs fully covered through University-wide Faculty and Staff Well-being program and made possible by support from Cigna and Kaiser Permanente, attendees were able to engage in a wide range of activities at no cost.

Participants explored the natural landscape through guided hiking, tested their limits on challenge course elements, and built new skills through activities like archery and axe throwing. The day also provided space for restoration and connection, whether relaxing in a hammock, gathering with peers on the porch, or simply taking in the surroundings.

For those seeking an additional challenge, a guided via ferrata climbing experience deepened their engagement with the landscape. Others opted for a Writing for Well-Being workshop led by DU faculty or a tour of campus, further enriching their connection to place and self.



Strategic Priorities for the Future

Expanding Student Access, Engagement, and Experiential Pathways

Over the past four years, the KMC team has focused on building a strong, intentional foundation designed to ensure the campus's long-term viability. The next phase focuses on expanding access, increasing utilization, and advancing the vision of *two campuses, one DU* – where the KMC becomes a more of a consistent and accessible part of the student experience.

The launch of the Resilience Lab, anchored in the KMC's Resilience in the Outdoors program, will introduce a more intentional framework for student growth, connecting outdoor experiences with well-being, adaptability, and human performance.

At the same time, DU Outdoors will expand student leadership pathways, with Outdoor Peer Mentors facilitating via ferrata rock climbs and challenge courses; instructing mountain bike clinics and excursions; and leading backpacking, canyoning, and mountaineering trips. These peer-led experiences increase access while building leadership capacity.



Additionally, going forward, pre-orientation wilderness trips connected to First Ascent will launch from the KMC, creating an early pathway for connection, confidence, and belonging. Beyond these entry points, focus will shift to increasing opportunities for students to regularly use the KMC for multiple purposes beyond physical recreation: step away, recharge, study, and connect throughout the year.

Together, these efforts move the KMC from a set of programs to a connected set of student pathways, ensuring more students engage, return, and grow over time.



Advancing Applied Learning, Stewardship, and Research

The goal of the KMC Design Lab and our DU Forward initiative is to increase academic and research activity on the campus. This includes expanding course use, supporting faculty engagement, and leveraging recently renovated academic spaces to support hands-on learning. By increasing consistent use of the campus for field-based education, the KMC strengthens the connection between academic work and real-world applications while supporting DU's sustainability and stewardship priorities.



Strengthening Belonging, Well-Being, and Community

The KMC provides space for students to step outside their routines and reconnect with themselves, each other, and the outdoors. The goal is to expand both structured programs and informal access, including study weekends, student getaways, and well-being experiences. These opportunities support mental health, a sense of belonging, and persistence while reinforcing the KMC as a place students choose to return to.

Building a Sustainable, Year-Round Model

KMC will drive long-term sustainability by increasing year-round utilization and expanding mission-aligned partnerships. With its facilities and setting, the KMC is well-positioned to host alumni engagement, faculty and staff programming, and external partnerships. The goal is a balanced model that generates revenue, strengthens DU's presence, and maintains a clear student-first focus.



Looking Ahead

The next phase of the KMC is focused on access, consistency, and integration, building on early momentum to ensure more students experience the KMC not just once or through one type of experience, but throughout their time at DU as a place to grow, recharge, and lead.





PART FIVE

The Full *Picture*

Numbers



Fundraising

As we complete year four of operations at the KMC, we continue advancing toward long-term financial sustainability through a two-pronged strategy: growing the endowment and expanding auxiliary revenue.

To date, we have secured $14.6 million toward our $40 million endowment goal, which will ultimately support approximately half of the KMC's annual operating costs. Current-use contributions are expected to fund most operations through FY2030, allowing us to reinvest endowment earnings and project growth to approximately $19 million by that time.

The KMC was also a featured project during DU's largest annual day of giving, 1DAY4DU, raising nearly $12,000 in immediate-use funds from generous donors. As early commitments from founding supporters are fulfilled, we are actively engaging these champions in renewed investment opportunities while cultivating new relationships with philanthropists who share our vision. Together, these efforts position the KMC for sustained growth and lasting impact.





Financials

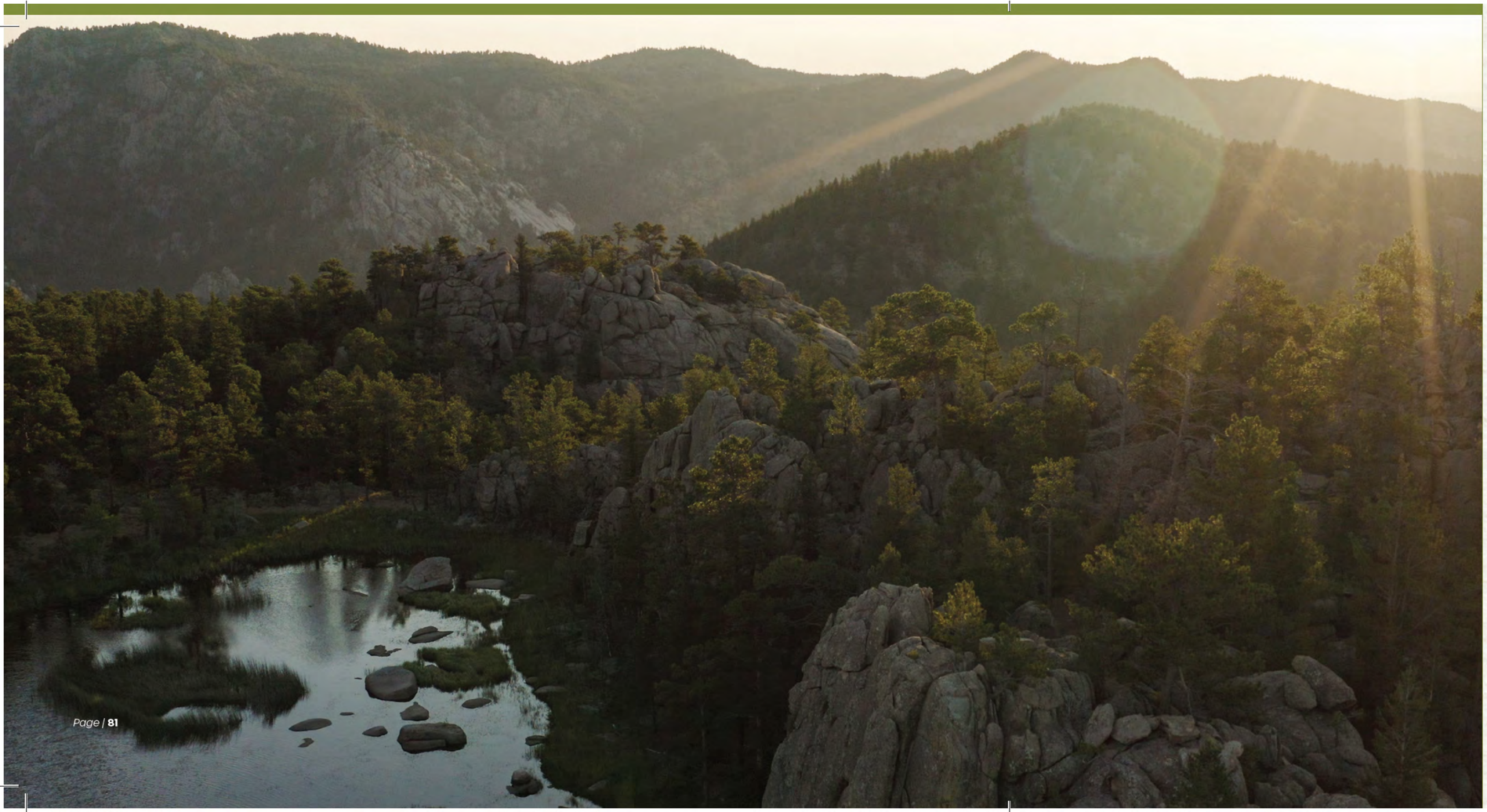
James C. Kennedy Mountain Campus	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26 Apr. Month End	Projected FY26 Forecast	FY21 to FY25
Mountain Campus	118,500	231,720	174,667	383,376	341,823	348,387	348,387	1,249,758
Trailsend Mountain Fund	1,000,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,000,000
Kennedy Mountain Campus Gift	-	25,176,056	2,000,000	-	2,216,048	2,246,243	2,246,243	29,392,104
Taylor Mountain Campus Gift	-	10,000,000	-	-	-	-	-	10,000,000
The KMC Mile Makers				14,022	24,884	(10,661)	(10,661)	38,906
Endowment Payouts	Endowment payouts are currently being reinvested to support growth of the funds							
Mountain Campus Gifts	1,118,500	35,407,776	2,174,667	397,398	2,582,700	2,583,969	2,583,969	41,680,769

Other Sources	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26 Apr. Month End	Projected FY26 Forecast	FY21 to FY25
Transfer from Strategic Plan	20,000							20,000
Registration Fees			5,775	28,735	41,366	44,647	65,042	75,876
Facility Rental			7,950	63,922	160,747	27,361	82,099	232,619
Food & Beverage					-	242	-	-
Special Sales (Pass-Through Expenses)			14,519	175,677	104,831	38,434	164,198	295,027
Total Non-Gift Funding	20,000	-	28,244	268,334	306,944	110,684	311,339	623,522
Total Sources	1,138,500	35,407,776	2,202,639	665,732	2,889,644	2,694,653	2,895,308	42,304,291

Operating Expenditures	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26 Apr. Month End	Projected FY26 Forecast	FY21 to FY25
Administration/the KMC Program	-	291,715	770,541	562,132	661,228	597,670	718,238	2,285,616
The KMC Rentals	-	-	3,491	184,940	241,191	134,046	223,081	429,622
The KMC Outdoor Experience Program	-	13,090	235,062	280,812	274,056	192,220	252,045	803,021
The KMC Student Affairs (including First Ascent)	-	50,983	739,231	640,843	719,407	497,525	572,381	2,150,465
The KMC Academic Affairs	-	1,525	53,463	57,389	56,809	26,732	68,647	169,187
The KMC Maintenance Operations	-	310,367	913,688	835,629	768,052	549,596	688,462	2,827,736
The KMC AVC Search	-	76,828						
Total Operating Expenditures	-	744,508	2,715,477	2,561,746	2,720,744	1,997,789	2,522,854	8,742,475

Plant Fund Expenditures	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26 Apr. Month End	Projected FY26 Forecast	FY21 to FY25
Purchase		11,336,850	-	-	-	-	-	11,336,850
Property Improvements	-	1,523,797	8,205,563	1,633,692	941,223	2,191,837	2,010,000	12,304,275
Capital Equipment	-	149,540	172,247	63,649	-	-	-	385,436
The KMC Donor Signage/Wayfinding							-	-
Real Estate Services	12,398							12,398
Capital Repair & Replacement								-
Transportation (National Bus Sales, Sprinter)					219,736			219,736
Total Plant Fund Expenditures	12,398	13,010,187	8,377,810	1,697,341	1,160,959	2,191,837	2,010,000	24,258,694

	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26 Apr. Month End	Projected FY26 Forecast	FY21 to FY25
Total Uses	12,398	13,754,696	11,093,287	4,259,087	3,881,703	4,189,626	4,532,854	33,001,169
Sources less Uses	1,126,103	21,653,081	(8,890,648)	(3,593,355)	(992,058)	(1,494,973)	(1,637,546)	
Available from Prior Year	-	1,126,103	22,759,183	13,868,535	10,275,180	9,283,122	9,283,122	
Ending Balance	1,126,103	22,759,183	13,868,535	10,275,180	9,283,122	7,788,149	7,645,576	



Thank you for supporting KMC

Your generous support of the James C. Kennedy Mountain Campus creates powerful, life-changing experiences for University of Denver students, extending their learning, growth, and sense of possibility far beyond the classroom. In this immersive environment, students apply what they learn, build resilience and self-awareness, and develop the leadership skills and confidence that shape their academic, personal, and professional journeys. Thank you for helping show the world what DU can do, one adventure at a time.

UNIVERSITY OF DENVER

THE
DENVER DIFFERENCE
WHAT DU CAN DO

For more information, visit denverdifference.org