

Check out the 2023 GNAR Initiative Highlight Reel!

Elizabeth Sodja

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Dear Friends,

Not sure about you all, but it feels like 2023 came and went in a flash for the GNAR Initiative team! The last twelve months looked a little different for us than our first two years, and we're taking a moment to pause and reflect on what we accomplished in 2023 before we dive excitedly into 2024!

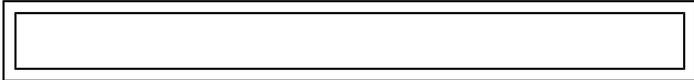
Keep scrolling to find links to our webinars, our 2023 GNARly Blog posts, research updates, news articles, and some very exciting project announcements!

We'd also like to take a moment to say **Thank You!** Through your generous support, collaborative efforts, assistance and on the ground insights, the GNAR Initiative was able to keep being a resource and hub for communities, researchers, experts, and those passionate about helping these incredible communities preserve what makes them special and thrive into the future.

If you would like to get involved in our work in other ways, please contact our Coordinator, Elizabeth Sodja (liz.sodja@usu.edu). We can't do this without your support, so thank you!

We wish all of you the best, and happy 2024!

Warmly,
The GNAR Initiative Team



Webinar Recordings



Planning for a GNARly Future Online Learning Series:

In 2023, we concluded our **Planning for a GNARly Future: Reimagining Planning to Empower Your Community**. Our goal for this series was to create a line-up of virtual, informative and engaging sessions that brought together leading practitioners and scholars in the planning field. These speakers shared community experiences, introduced cutting-edge practices, and discussed principles relevant to our research-identified topics important for gateway community planning and development.

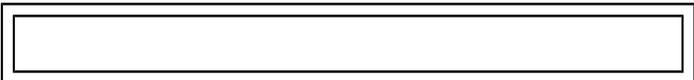
This "learning series" also gave us an opportunity to test a new way of presenting our online learning content, by combining our webinars with peer-to-peer learning for participants who wanted to dive deeper into the content.

Our sessions were attended by over 200+ participants, and since the completion of the series, session recordings have received a combined 500+ views on YouTube.

You can check out the recordings of each session below:

- **REFOCUS:** Values as Vision
- **REFRAME:** Focus On Assets, Not Deficits
- **REENGAGE:** Mobilizing Your Community Through Proactive Engagement
- **REDEFINE:** Solutions Beyond Boundaries
- **REIMAGINE:** Planning, Not Plans

We also wrote a **series summary report** that highlights key series takeaways, and links to slides and additional resources from the sessions.



The GNARly Blog at a Glance



The **GNARly Blog** had a quieter 2023, but still published eight blogs showcasing ideas and projects from GNAR communities, research and resources from some great GNAR community partners, and several highlights of our own work this year (including the opportunity to present in front of six western governors at the Western Governors Association conference!).

Not familiar with our blog? The GNARly Blog is one way the GNAR Initiative spurs inter-community communication and shares stories and best practices from communities addressing challenges and innovating on the ground. These posts can be about lessons learned, case studies, model ordinances, new programs, or opportunities for collaboration within communities.

We are always looking for new topics and bloggers, so if you have an idea you'd like to share, check out our [blog guidelines](#) and/or email liz.sodja@usu.edu.

Here's a complete list of all 2023 GNARly Blogs:

- **Jan 31** - The Mountain Neighbor Handbook: A Local's Guide to Stewardship in the Tetons
- **Feb 16** - Rural Outdoor Recreation Economies: Challenges and Opportunities
- **Feb 28** - How Chaffee County, CO Crafted a "Win-Win" for Recreation and Agriculture
- **Jul 6** - What makes a Resilient Outdoor Recreation Economy? GNAR Community Survey Highlights from WGA
- **Jul 26** - The Amenity Trap: How high-amenity communities can avoid being loved to death
- **Nov 14** - GNAR On the Road!
- **Dec 13** - What is the GNAR Academy?

Research Project Updates



THE GNARLY CHALLENGES, GNARLY SOLUTIONS STUDY UPDATE:

In 2021, with initial funding from the National Institute for Transportation and Communities (NITC), we launched a flagship multi-year study to explore interconnected housing, transportation, and land use issues in GNAR communities. In 2022, we put out a massive community survey that received over 250 community responses!

In 2023, the NITC research team put out their **final report with findings from the survey**, and with the help of several dedicated graduate students we were able to complete several community case studies. We're excited to continue digging into this important data and seeing what other findings come from it.

GNAR Staff in the News

Finally, our staff were interviewed and/or quoted in eight different news articles this year across local, national, and international publications, and even published an article of our in USU Alumni Magazine! Check them out below:

- **February 6 (NBC News)** - The remote workers have left, but the housing havoc they created remains
- **March 3 (Outside Podcast)** - To Save the Soul of a Mountain Town
- **March 24 (High Country News)** - As Utah's ski tourism grows, locals' needs are neglected
- **May 4 (American Bar Association)** - Environmental Dispute Resolution: Past, Present, and Future
- **July 12 (PBS Utah)** - Digital Nomads and the Housing Dilemma

- **August 8 (SL Tribune)** - Opinion: To disagree better, we need to increase our conflict competence
- **September 13 (USU Alumni Magazine)** - Trouble in Paradise: Tackling the Challenges of Living in Utah's Outdoor Recreation Communities
- **October 13 (The Livingston Enterprise)** - Community survey finds pessimism, but opportunity

