

COLORADO PARKS & WILDLIFE

# Future Generations Act Report 2024

OCTOBER 2024



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# Contents

<b>Letter from the Director</b> .....	5	<b>Goal 7: Reduce Maintenance Backlog and Repair for High Risk Dams</b> .....	25
<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	7	Rehabilitating High Risk Dams .....	25
Goal progress base lining and tracking .....	7	Reducing dam maintenance and repair backlog .....	25
<b>Goal 1: Increasing the Number of Hunters and Anglers</b> .....	8	<b>Goal 8: Increase the Number of Fish Stocked and Renovate Fish Hatcheries</b> .....	26
Expanding hunter and angler education and outreach .....	8	Increasing fish production .....	26
Increasing grants for Fishing is Fun .....	8	Modernizing and renovating the hatchery system .....	26
Developing the Cameo Shooting and Education Complex ..	10	<b>Goal 9: Reduce Large Capital Construction Backlog</b> .....	27
Expanding grants for shooting ranges .....	11	Reduce capital construction and maintenance backlog .....	27
<b>Goal 2: Partnering with Stakeholders to Engage All Outdoor Recreationists</b> .....	14	<b>Goal 10: Reduce the Need to List Additional Species</b> .....	28
Strengthening partnerships with stakeholders .....	14	Investing in non-game species conservation .....	28
Growing new sources of funding .....	15	Investing in wetlands conservation .....	28
<b>Goal 3: Recruiting and Retaining Qualified Employees</b> ....	16	Partnering in pursuit of mutual goals .....	28
Recruiting new employees .....	16	<b>Impact on License Sales</b> .....	31
Increasing volunteer resources .....	16	<b>Appendix 1</b> .....	32
<b>Goal 4: Supporting Access Programs on Public and Private Lands</b> .....	18	Reporting Requirements for the Future Generations Act ...	32
Expanding access through trails .....	18	<b>Appendix 2</b> .....	33
Expanding access to wildlife-related recreation .....	18	Colorado Waterfowl Stamp Fund Grants .....	33
<b>Goal 5: Increasing and Improving Big Game Populations</b> ..	20	<b>Appendix 3</b> .....	34
Increasing and improving habitat for big game populations .	20	Keep Colorado Wild Act Report 2024 .....	34
Improving big game winter range and migration corridors ..	20	Goal progress base lining and tracking .....	35
<b>Goal 6: Identifying and Beginning to Plan a New Colorado State Park</b> .....	23	Goal A .....	36
Planning Fishers Peak State Park .....	23	Goal B .....	37
Sweetwater Lake Project .....	23	Goals C-J .....	38
Colorado Clays State Recreation Area .....	23		
Investing in operations, maintenance and customer service .	23		



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# Letter from the Director

I am pleased to share Colorado Parks and Wildlife's (CPW) progress on the 10 goals outlined in the Hunting, Fishing, and Parks for Future Generations Act (Senate Bill 18-143) in this sixth annual report. Our work to fulfill these goals continues the mission we've upheld for over 125 years: to protect Colorado's wildlife resources, maintain a high-quality state parks system, and provide sustainable outdoor recreation that inspires stewardship for future generations.

This past year, we have seen continued success in our efforts to increase the number of hunters and anglers in Colorado. In 2024, we offered 470 hunter education courses, attended by nearly 12,300 students. Our Shooting Range Development Grant Program also awarded over \$1.4 million to eight projects across the state, supporting the establishment and improvement of shooting ranges in Colorado.

In our efforts to engage all outdoor recreationists, we have worked closely with stakeholders to develop new strategies. In 2023, we took a step back from hosting the Partners in the Outdoors Conference to gather feedback and build stronger relationships. This feedback was invaluable in shaping the successful 2024 conference. Additionally, we awarded more than \$161,000 in grants to 20 partner organizations, focusing on projects aligned with the priorities of the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan.

Our funding sources have also grown. The Keep Colorado Wild (KCW) Pass, launched in January 2023, has generated approximately \$62 million as of June 30, 2024. The pass provides affordable access to all Colorado state parks and is helping to fund wildlife and recreation programs across the state.

Recruiting and retaining qualified employees remains a top priority. We have streamlined our park manager and wildlife manager hiring process, reducing the time from job announcement to offer from eight months to just 1.5 months. In 2023, we received 484 applicants for our 2024 hiring class. Partnerships with organizations like the Colorado Youth Corps Association, Hispanic Access Foundation, and Environmental Learning for Kids are also essential to our efforts in recruiting future talent.

Retaining our existing workforce is equally important. We are piloting a peer coaching and mentoring program within the agency, with the Peer Support Team making significant progress in 2023. We're refining training requirements and policies to fully implement the Peer Support Program in the coming months.

Volunteers continue to play a vital role in our success. In Fiscal Year 2024, approximately 4,800 volunteers contributed nearly 274,000 hours of service — an economic impact of over \$9.9 million, equivalent to 132 full-time employees. We've also improved our volunteer database to ensure accurate tracking of hours and have enhanced communication with our volunteers.

CPW remains committed to expanding public access to outdoor recreation. In 2024, we awarded 24 non-motorized trail grants totaling \$2.4 million, five Land and Water Conservation Fund grants totaling \$5.5 million, 52 off-highway vehicle (OHV) grants exceeding \$6.2 million, and 36 snowmobile grants nearing \$1.3 million.

Our conservation efforts have focused on improving habitat for Colorado's big game populations. Last year, we invested nearly \$57.2 million — a 79% increase over previous years — toward the conservation and improvement of big game habitat.

We continue to develop new state parks as well, including progress on Fishers Peak State Park and the Sweetwater Lake Project. CPW is also making strides at Colorado Clays State Recreation Area and investing in operations, maintenance, and customer service to better serve the public.

Addressing our infrastructure needs is critical to maintaining high-quality facilities. We have prioritized reducing our \$44.76 million maintenance backlog for 11 dams owned and operated by the agency. Additional funding from Senate Bill 21-112 allowed us to invest \$20 million toward infrastructure improvements at 12 parks statewide, including facility enhancements to accommodate growing public demand.

Fish production has increased significantly in the past year. Last year, we stocked over 3.2 million catchable trout, nearly 14 million sub-catchable trout, and more than 81 million warm water species. We've also modernized and renovated our fish hatcheries, with over \$2.8 million awarded for improvements — a 130% increase over baseline funding.

CPW remains dedicated to conserving non-game species and preventing the need for future listings under the Endangered Species Act. Last year, we invested nearly \$13.3 million in research, population monitoring, habitat restoration, and species reintroduction efforts to support Colorado's diverse wildlife.

We remain committed to safeguarding Colorado's natural resources so they can be enjoyed by future generations. We deeply appreciate your continued trust in Colorado Parks and Wildlife, and we are honored to serve as the stewards of the state's wildlife, parks, and outdoor spaces. It is with pride that we present the 2024 Future Generations Act Report, showcasing our progress and dedication to preserving the Colorado we all cherish.

Regards,



Jeff Davis

Director, Colorado Parks and Wildlife







# Executive Summary

With the passage of the Hunting, Fishing, and Parks for Future Generations Act (Act) by the Colorado General Assembly in 2018 (Senate Bill 18-143), Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) committed to fulfilling 10 goals by 2025:

1. Increasing the number of hunters and anglers in Colorado in the face of national declines in hunting and fishing numbers through investments in recruitment programs, such as hunter education and Fishing is Fun, the development of the Cameo Shooting and Education Complex, and grants for shooting ranges in all regions of the state;

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Partnering with stakeholders to develop strategies to engage all outdoor recreationists, including hikers, bikers, climbers, and wildlife watchers, in funding the division and commission, maintenance of state lands and facilities, and management of wildlife;

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2. Recruiting and retaining qualified employees to manage wildlife, park, recreational, and aquatic resources;

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3. Supporting access programs on public and private lands, including the renewal of existing high-priority leases that provide public access for hunters, anglers, and outdoor recreationists;

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4. Increasing and improving the state's big game populations through investments in habitat and conservation, including increased support for highway wildlife crossings to protect animals and motorists;

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5. Identifying and beginning to plan the development of a new Colorado state park and investing in other initiatives to increase park visitation, maintain excellent customer service, and generate revenue;

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Reducing the \$44.76 million maintenance and repair backlog by 50% for the 11 dams owned and operated by the division that pose the highest risks to life and property, and establishing an appropriate funding stream to continue maintenance of all of the division's 110 dams;

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6. Increasing the number of fish stocked in Colorado water to more than 90 million through the development of a statewide hatchery modernization plan, renovation of one of the state's 19 fish hatcheries, and reduction in the maintenance backlog for all hatcheries, many of which are 70 to 100 years old;

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7. Reducing the division's known \$26 million large capital construction and maintenance backlog by 50% and establishing a capital development backlog strategic plan to provide a stable funding stream to address future maintenance projects at state wildlife areas and state parks; and

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8. Reducing the need to list additional state trust species under the federal "Endangered Species Act of 1973" (16 U.S.C. sec. 1531 et seq.) by partnering with private landowners to improve species distribution and abundance monitoring and disease prevention efforts (Section 2 (1)).
9. Reducing the need to list additional state trust species under the federal "Endangered Species Act of 1973" (16 U.S.C. sec. 1531 et seq.) by partnering with private landowners to improve species distribution and abundance monitoring and disease prevention efforts (Section 2 (1)).
10. Reducing the need to list additional state trust species under the federal "Endangered Species Act of 1973" (16 U.S.C. sec. 1531 et seq.) by partnering with private landowners to improve species distribution and abundance monitoring and disease prevention efforts (Section 2 (1)).

Most of the fee increases enabled by the legislation were initiated on January 1, 2019, with the majority of the financial benefits of the Act being realized starting in the fall of 2019. Significant progress has been made towards fulfilling the Act's ten goals, and CPW is pleased to share our progress in this sixth annual report, covering the 2023-2024 Colorado state fiscal year (FY24).

## Goal progress base lining and tracking

Following the narrative description of the activities undertaken during FY24 for each of the ten goals, a metric summary table provides a snapshot of specific data CPW tracks year-over-year to ground our work in measurable and reportable ways. The metric tables include baseline data which, in most cases, is the average of three fiscal years: FY16, FY17, and FY18. In certain cases, a new metric was added since the writing of the first Future Generations Act Report in FY19, or includes a data point not previously tracked. The summary tables contain data from FY24, and present increases or decreases from the baseline data to help understand changes over time.



# Goal 1: Increasing the Number of Hunters and Anglers

Hunters and anglers are major contributors to wildlife and habitat conservation in Colorado. Hunting and angling are also important aspects of Colorado's economy, heritage, and necessary tools used to manage and propagate fish and wildlife populations across the state.

As of 2022 (the last year for which data on individual license holders has been reported<sup>1</sup>), there were over 873,000 Colorado fishing license holders representing a steady hold from the baseline values, and over 378,000 Colorado hunting license holders, 29% increase over the baseline values. CPW continues its work to increase hunting and fishing participation through investments in outreach programs, education, and grants.

## Expanding hunter and angler education and outreach

CPW provides high-quality hunter education programming that acquaints new hunters to CPW, instills responsible hunting skills and ethics, and fulfills the statutory requirements for future hunters to successfully complete a mandated educational program. CPW offers hunter education classes across the state in two formats: online with an in-person component and traditional in-person classroom instruction.

In FY24, CPW offered 470 hunter education courses. Of these, 209 were traditional in-person courses, 248 were internet conclusion courses, which are shorter in-person classes following the online course, and 13 were bowhunter education courses. Additionally, three Spanish-only courses were held by a volunteer hunter education instructor. In all, nearly 12,300 students attended a hunter education course in Colorado during FY24.

While the number of students participating is still not as high as it was prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, it does show a steady increase in the number of students since FY22. There is still the persistent issue of students registering for a class but not showing up. Additionally, some very active volunteer instructors have left the program, resulting in a lower number of classes being held than before the pandemic. CPW may need to look at alternative options for recruiting both volunteer instructors and students.

The passage of a new law that allows public or charter schools to offer hunter education courses during seventh grade has made it easier for schools to include hunter education as a part of their curriculum. In FY24, a total of seven courses were a part of the Hunter Education in Schools program, and it is likely that many more classes were taught as a part of that program, but not recorded.

CPW's Hunter Outreach Program seeks to recruit, retain, and reactivate new, non-traditional, and lapsed hunters through clinics, seminars, advice, mentored hunts and online educational content. Hunter outreach programming is designed specifically to appeal to diverse interests and levels of ability. In FY24, CPW's Hunter Outreach Program reached nearly 10,900 participants across the state through more than 142 events, including seminars, clinics and webinars. This represents a 141% increase in hunter outreach participants in comparison to baseline levels. In addition, the program facilitated 139 mentored hunts, including youth, novice adults, sponsored, and "dream hunts," providing 489 hunters a unique hunting experience. CPW continues to receive more applications for youth and novice adult mentored hunts than can be fulfilled due to volunteer and staffing constraints and has instead offered various seminars

and skills clinics to reach a larger number of new hunters. Additionally, the Hunter Outreach program has focused on training new volunteers in underserved areas of the state, as a means to support and grow local staff's outreach efforts.

CPW's Angler Education Program promotes the state's aquatic resources and encourages people to enjoy the outdoors responsibly through fishing. Oftentimes angler outreach events are focused on first time anglers, families, or a new technique of fishing. In FY24, CPW staff and angler outreach volunteers held 331 fishing clinics or events around the state, reaching approximately 11,600 anglers, a 55% increase in attendance from baseline levels. In FY24, the Angler Education Program worked hard to distribute more equipment to state parks across the state, enabling individual parks like Staunton, Barr Lake, Boyd Lake, Chatfield, Ridgway, Pueblo and Mueller, to host events themselves. Additionally, the Angler Education Program focused on hosting more large-scale events with hundreds of participants like International Sportsmen's Expo and Safe Summer Kickoff on Get Outdoors Day, greatly increasing the number of participants.

## Increasing grants for Fishing is Fun

The Fishing is Fun Program provides grants annually to local and county governments, park and recreation departments, water districts, and angling organizations for projects to improve angling in Colorado. Fishing is Fun grant awards are matched by local funds, along with in-kind services, materials and volunteer time, often covering 40-50% of project costs.

In FY24, CPW granted over \$1,760,200 (including matching funds) to seven Fishing is Fun projects that aim to revitalize aquatic ecosystems and improve angling opportunities across the state (Figure 1). The projects this year focused on creating American Disability Act (ADA)-accessible fishing piers, improving fishing access and facilities, and habitat improvement.



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<sup>1</sup> This corresponds to US Fish and Wildlife Service Reporting Year 2024.



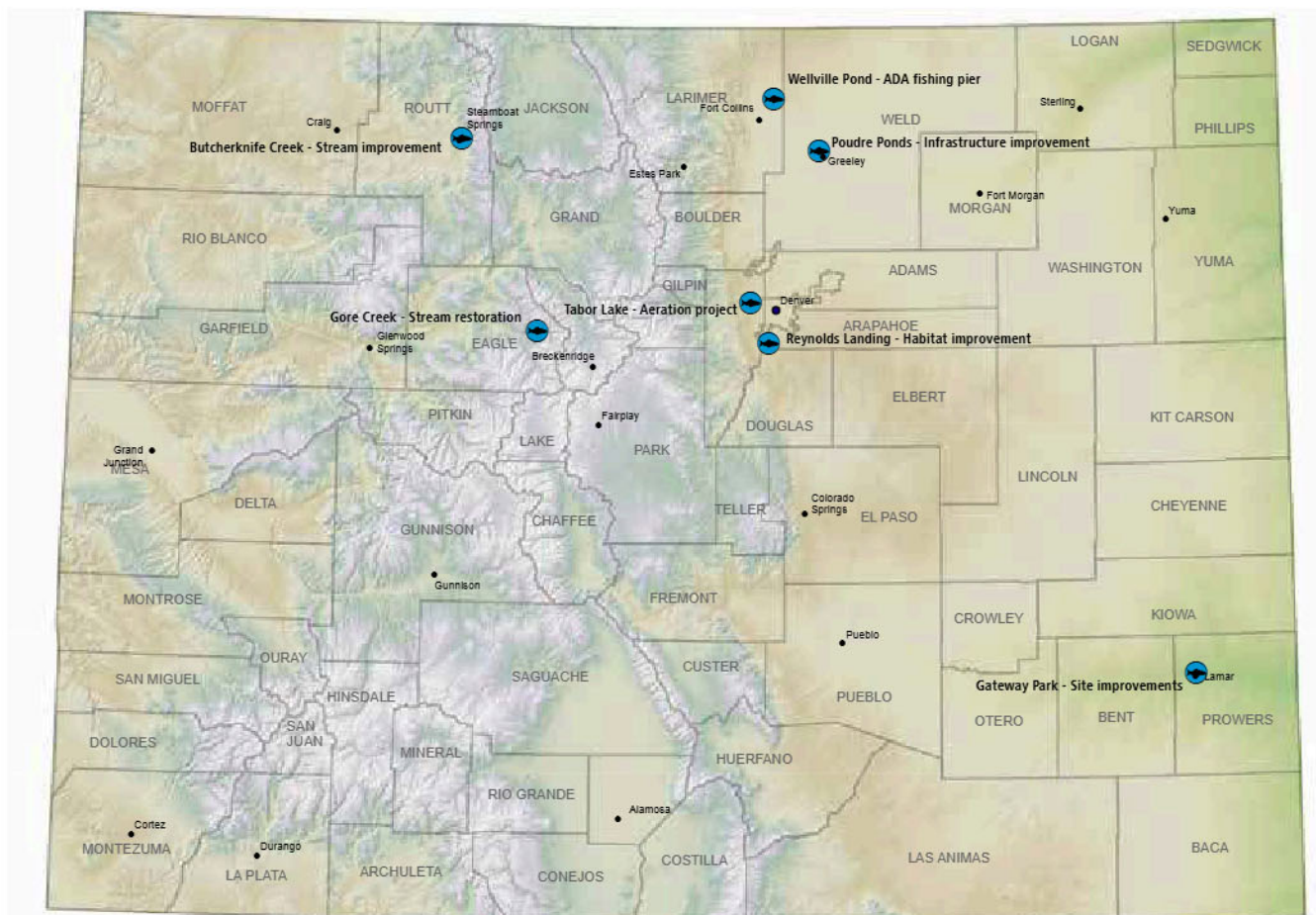
Funding for around \$699,300 of the grant awards came from the Federal Sport Fish Restoration Program, which comes from excise taxes on fishing equipment and motorboat fuel. The projects awarded funding in FY24 include:

- ▶ **Tabor Lake in Wheat Ridge:** funding will support habitat improvement through aeration and improving the oxygen levels
- ▶ **Gateway Park in Lamar:** funding will provide better access by adding an ADA fishing pier
- ▶ **Gore Creek near Vail:** funding will focus on in-stream habitat improvement
- ▶ **Butcherknife Creek in Steamboat Spring:** funding will improve angler access to this stream
- ▶ **Wellville Ponds in Wellington:** funding will provide better access by adding an ADA fishing pier
- ▶ **Poudre Ponds in Greeley:** funding will improve the boat ramp, signage, shade shelters, and bathrooms
- ▶ **Reynolds Landing on the South Platte River:** funding will focus on in-stream habitat improvement and fish passage structures



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Figure 1: 2024 Fishing is Fun Projects





## Developing the Cameo Shooting and Education Complex

The Cameo Shooting and Education Complex (CSEC) is a world-class educational and training facility and a top destination for people to participate in organized shooting competitions, sharpen their skills, or learn about the safe use of firearms. During FY24, CSEC hosted 370 permitted events, including competitions and training classes. They had over 20,800 paid visitors, including nearly 15,200 members of the general public who “walked in” and over 5,600 event attendees. This is an overall attendance increase of 5% over FY23.

Some notable events at CSEC in FY24 include hosting the annual A Girl and A Gun’s National Conference, where over 850 women from all 50 states came for a week of classes, bringing substantial revenue to the local community. CSEC also hosted the first ever Ultimate Hunter Shooting Sports Championship, which included all five of the hunting-based scenario competitions (rifle, archer, rimfire, handgun and muzzleloader). CSEC has also developed a popular new hunter training program called The Hunter Field Engagement Course, which gives participants the opportunity to learn how to engage targets in natural field conditions at ethical hunting distances using common hunting rifles.

While the number of paid public visitors, event attendees and competitions have increased dramatically over the baseline levels, growth remains hampered by a requirement that visitors sign a “participation agreement” related to magazine capacity. Unfortunately, CSEC lost many regional, national and international competitions, as a result of this requirement, which has had significant impacts on CSEC’s revenue. During FY24, CSEC staff moved forward with plans to diversify its activities into rifle, archery and shotgun sports events, which are not impacted by the new requirements, but have limited attendance capacity. Of note, CSEC hosted the annual Koenig/Ruger Precision Rifle Series event and the 2024 Precision Rifle World Championship.

Also during FY24, CPW added a sound system at the long range rifle, constructed parking areas, improved the drainage on all of the roads and trails, and developed new range equipment and facilities to support the Ultimate Hunter Shooting Sports competitions. Design for Phase II of CSEC, which includes plans for the construction of a large visitor center with classrooms, indoor ranges, natural history museum, native plant species botanical garden, retail pro-shop, eatery, fishing pond and wetlands area, outdoor education laboratory and playground, was put on hold until funding can be secured.





## Expanding grants for shooting ranges

CPW's Shooting Range Development Grant (SRDG) Program focuses on establishing new shooting ranges and expanding or improving existing ranges across Colorado by providing matching grants to towns, counties, outdoor recreation organizations, shooting clubs, and others. In FY24, CPW granted over \$1,482,200 (including matching funds) through eight different projects across the state including:

- ▶ Developing a new archery range, Kiowa Creek Archery Range, just east of Denver with Arapahoe County Open Space
- ▶ Replacing aging infrastructure at the Pikes Peak Gun Club
- ▶ Developing an indoor range in Rifle with the Colorado State University Extension Office
- ▶ Revamping a private shooting range and reopening it as a public range in Clear Creek County
- ▶ Developing a new archery range just outside of Pagosa Springs with Wolf Creek Gun and Bow
- ▶ Updating equipment at Pueblo Trap and Skeet
- ▶ Adding a sporting clays course to the Golden Gun Club range east of Denver
- ▶ Updating an antiquated trap range with the Buena Vista Sportsman's Club

CPW also administers the Small Shooting Range Grant (SSRG) Program, which offers grants of up to \$5,000 per project for improvements at Colorado shooting ranges that allow hunter education courses, public sight-in days, and youth and family involvement in the shooting sports. The program enhances safety and increases public access to shooting ranges through smaller capital improvements, upgrades, replacement, and repair of existing shooting range features. In FY24, CPW approved ten grants totaling about \$61,300 (including matching funds) to ranges across the state. SSRG projects funded in FY24 include:

- ▶ Blue Valley Sportsman Club purchasing and installing new doors on the thrower bunkers
- ▶ Chaffee County Archery Range purchasing and installing new targets
- ▶ Dennis Hansen Archery Range (Big Thompson Bowhunters) purchasing and installing new turrets and target backers
- ▶ Gunnison Sportsman's Association improving the berm on the pistol range and doing weed mitigation
- ▶ Logan County Shooting Sports Complex purchasing and installing shooting benches
- ▶ Pueblo Skeet and Trap Club replacing the air conditioning unit in the meeting house to allow for more classes
- ▶ Pueblo West Sportsman's Association installing a concrete pad around the bathroom to improve ADA accessibility
- ▶ Southern Ute Indian Tribe Gun Range building and installing a concrete pad, a canopy and target stands
- ▶ Teller County purchasing and installing new signage and solar chargers for the throwers
- ▶ Washington County Gun Club purchasing and installing concrete pads, new building siding and archery target stands

CPW also operates ranges on some state wildlife areas (SWA) and state park properties. In FY24, CPW allocated \$999,700 toward six archery and shooting range projects on CPW properties across the state. Among the improvements funded in FY24 are:

- ▶ Constructing a new archery range at the Park County Shooting Range
- ▶ Improving safety and infrastructure at the Chaffee County Shooting Range and Conejos County Range
- ▶ Replacing 3D targets and improving road infrastructure at the Cameo Shooting and Education Complex
- ▶ Upgrading infrastructure at Colorado Clays Shooting Park

Figure 2 shows the location of all of the FY24 funded Shooting Range Development Grant projects and CPW range projects.

**Figure 2:**  
2024  
Shooting Range  
Development  
Grants

 Shooting Range Projects

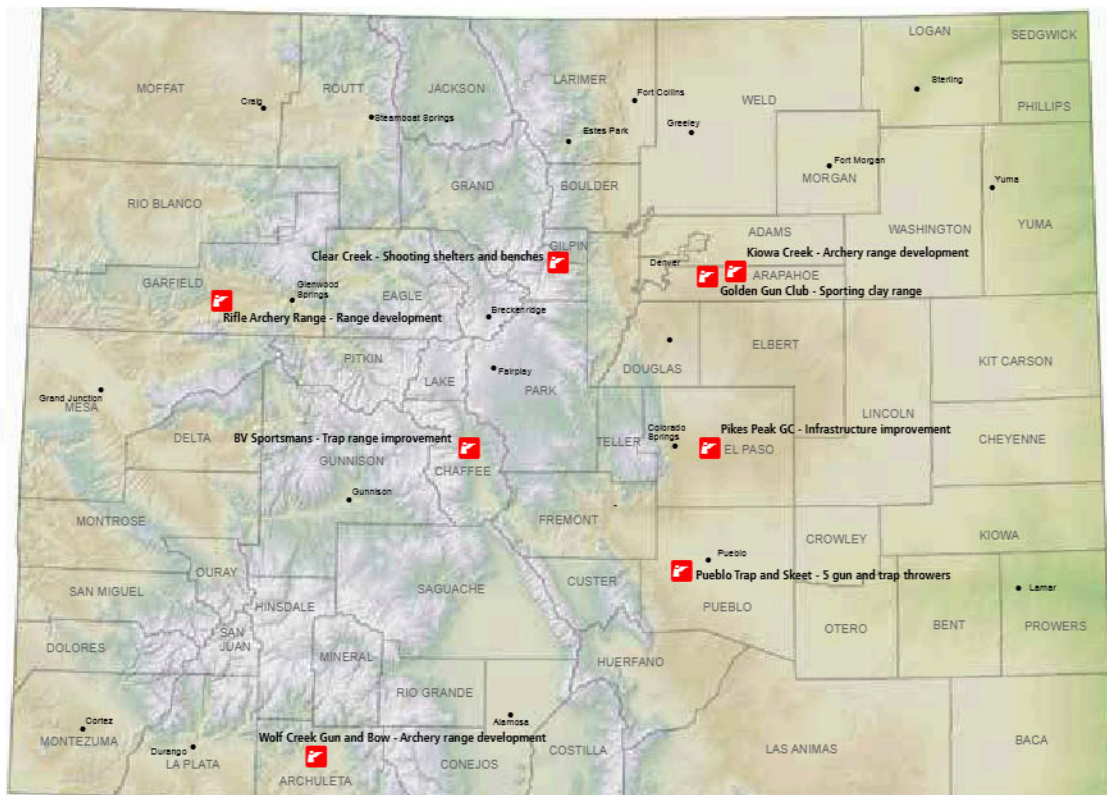








TABLE 1

**GOAL #1. Increasing the number of hunters and anglers in Colorado in the face of national declines in hunting and fishing numbers through investments in recruitment programs, such as hunter education and Fishing is Fun, the development of the Cameo Shooting and Education Complex, and grants for shooting ranges in all regions of the state.**

Metric	Baseline Year	Baseline Data	FY 2024	FY 2024 % Change (from baseline)
Number of fishing license holders reported to USFWS	3-year average of FWS Reporting Year 2017/18/19	871,000	873,791	0%
Number of hunting license holders reported to USFWS	3-year average of FWS Reporting Year 2017/18/19	294,000	378,301	29%
Participants in Hunter Outreach activities	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	4,500	10,858	141%
Participants in Angler Outreach activities	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	7,500	11,588	55%
Number of Angler Outreach clinics	FY19	150	331	121%
Number of Hunter Outreach events	FY19	240	142	-41%
Number of in-person Hunter Education courses offered	FY20	403	470	17%
Participants in Hunter Education courses (in-person and online-only)	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	16,800	12,292	-27%
Number of mentored hunts (CPW and Hunt Master Program)	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	100	139	39%
Number of hunters in mentored hunts	FY20	444	489	10%
Amount awarded for Fishing is Fun grants	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	\$400,000	\$1,760,230	340%
Number of Fishing is Fun grants awarded	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	8	7	-13%
Number of paid public visitors to CSEC	FY19	2,814	20,810	640%
Number of event attendees at CSEC	FY19	1,693	5,658	234%
Number of competitions held at CSEC	FY19	61	370	507%
Amount awarded for large shooting range grants	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	\$545,000	\$1,482,200	172%
Number of large shooting range grants awarded	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	8	8	0%
Amount awarded for small shooting range grants	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	\$47,000	\$61,273	30%
Number of small shooting range grants awarded	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	8	10	25%
Number of range projects grants on CPW properties	FY19	13	6	-54%
Amount awarded for range projects on CPW properties	FY18	\$477,000	\$999,713	110%

## Goal 2: Partnering with Stakeholders to Engage All Outdoor Recreationists

Developing and sustaining partnerships with outdoor recreationists, as well as increasing CPW's relevance in the lives of all Coloradans, helps to ensure that sufficient resources are available to fulfill our mission. CPW continues to cultivate new partnerships, strengthen existing partnerships, expand our reach, and explore and implement sustainable funding mechanisms.

### Strengthening partnerships with stakeholders

CPW's Partners Program is an outward-facing effort that brings together diverse interests from across the state, representing a large spectrum of the outdoor industry, in support of the agency's mission to manage wildlife, provide a quality state parks system, and inspire people to be active stewards of Colorado's natural resources. The Partners Program helps to foster alignment, awareness and trust among CPW and its many partners.

CPW chose to step back from hosting the 2023 Partners in the Outdoors Conference and instead took the year to engage with partners, listen, and better understand how CPW can collectively work with the partner network towards common goals. In August 2023, Partners Program staff worked with Civic Consulting Collaborative (CCC) to hold six listening sessions with the goals of (1) listening to the needs of the partners network and identifying opportunities to build more trust with the Partners Program and Conference and across the partners

network, and (2) generating a framework of potential actions to create an improved, more inclusive, and equitable Partners Conference. Feedback from the listening sessions heavily informed the planning and implementation of the 2024 Partners in the Outdoors Conference, which was highly successful with 415 registered attendees, 460 total conference participants and over 190 organizations represented. Additionally, in 2024, CPW awarded a total of \$161,400 in grant funding to 20 different partner organizations. All grant projects are collaborative in nature and address the priority areas identified in the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP).

Within CPW's Partners Program also exists the Colorado Outdoor Partnership (CO-OP) and the Regional Partnerships Initiative (RPI). The CO-OP is a collaboration of organizations representing the intersection of conservation and outdoor recreation and interests related to land, water, and wildlife in Colorado. The RPI funds regional coalitions that bring broad interests together to ensure that Colorado's lands, waters, and wildlife thrive while also providing for equitable and quality outdoor recreation experiences. There are now 20 Outdoor Regional Partnerships covering about 75% of the state (Figure 3). During the most recent grant cycle in the spring of 2024, CPW and partners distributed over \$1.3 million in funding for regional coalition development and planning initiatives, bringing the total amount of money invested to \$4.9 million.

Figure 3: 2024 Colorado Regional Partnerships





The spring 2024 grant recipients include:

- ▶ Eagle County Community Wildlife Roundtable
- ▶ Central Colorado Recreation Partnership
- ▶ Montelores Coalition
- ▶ Northwest Colorado Outdoor Coalition
- ▶ Outdoor Pikes Peak Initiative
- ▶ Pagosa Area Recreation Coalition
- ▶ Roaring Fork Outdoor Coalition
- ▶ Southeast Colorado Recreation Outdoor Alliance Movement
- ▶ West Slope Outdoors Alliance

In June 2024, CPW released a draft of Colorado’s Outdoor Strategy, a statewide vision to elevate common goals, amplify regionally rooted efforts, provide data and tools to inform local decision making, and advance coordinated, statewide strategies and funding for conservation, outdoor recreation and climate resilience. The Strategy supports and aligns the many efforts of diverse partners throughout the state who are working to advance climate-resilient conservation and outdoor recreation and is expected to be finalized at the end of 2024. The Strategy provides “North Star” goals while coordinating and aligning with other statewide plans like the SCORP and State Wildlife Action Plan.

**Growing new sources of funding**

CPW and the Department of Natural Resources continue to explore sustainable funding streams and ways to increase the agency’s relevance in the lives of all Coloradans. The Keep Colorado Wild (KCW) Pass Act, which Governor Polis signed into law on June 21, 2021, is a significant change to the way Colorado’s state parks are funded. Starting on January 1, 2023, the Keep Colorado Wild Pass is available to Coloradans when they register their vehicles and provides access to all Colorado state parks at a reduced price. CPW launched a robust marketing campaign around the pass, which has resulted in around 27% of Coloradans including the KCW Pass with their vehicle registration. As of June 30, 2024, the pass has helped raise about \$62 million since becoming available to purchase in January 2023. Funds generated from the KCW Pass are dedicated to supporting state parks, wildlife, and recreation programs (See Appendix 3).

Additionally, over the last two years CPW has made consistent progress towards formalizing a philanthropy program. This effort includes both raising funds and distributing donated funds in support of agency programs and projects. Staff continue to build awareness and educate the public about CPW’s activities and funding structure. On July 27, 2023 CPW held its first Day of Giving that raised nearly \$6,000 and saw increased engagement resulting in an 80% increase in donation revenue and a 71% increase in the number of donations. Staff have also been working with the Office of Information Technology (OIT) and other internal stakeholders to implement a philanthropy-focused database that will serve as an aggregate system and provide much needed insight into CPW’s donor base. The system is currently undergoing deployment and should be operational soon.

More than half of the donations CPW receives are restricted to specific programs. For the remaining unrestricted funds, staff launched the Philanthropy at Work internal funding opportunity in November 2023, which provides an opportunity for CPW staff to apply for support from donated funds. In the inaugural year, \$150,000 was awarded to 12 programs and projects across the

state. All of these efforts have increased donor support consistently each year. In FY24, private donations totaled over \$783,500, a 105% increase from the baseline amount, and add-on or round-up donations added to license and pass purchases totaled nearly \$379,500, a 585% increase from the baseline amount.

Additional voluntary contributions include those made to the Nongame and Endangered Wildlife Cash Fund, which receives donations as a part of Colorado’s state income tax return. Known as the income tax checkoff, this program provides Coloradans an opportunity to make an investment in Colorado’s wildlife and habitats. Contributions from the income tax checkoff totaled over \$269,500 in FY24, an increase of 35% over the baseline amount.

Finally, revenue received from the issuance and renewals of the Wildlife Sporting License Plate, a specialty license plate that allows vehicle owners to show their support for hunting, fishing, and wildlife recreation, totaled almost \$755,400 in FY23, an increase of over 600% from the baseline. Revenue generated from license plate sales and renewals is used to fund grants through the Fishing is Fun Program and the Shooting Range Development Grant Program. Additionally, with the passage of House Bill 23-1265, a new “Born to be Wild” license plate was created with the purpose of implementing nonlethal means of mitigating and preventing conflict with gray wolves. In FY 24, this new license plate generated around \$389,000.

TABLE 2				
GOAL #2. Partnering with stakeholders to develop strategies to engage all outdoor recreationists, including hikers, bikers, climbers, and wildlife watchers, in funding the division and commission, maintenance of state lands and facilities, and management of wildlife;				
Metric	Baseline Year	Baseline Data	FY 2024	FY 2024 % Change (from baseline)
Number of Partners in the Outdoors Conference Participants	FY18	518	460	-11%
Number of organizations represented by Partners in the Outdoors Conference participants	FY18	234	190	-19%
Amount of revenue received from “nongame and endangered wildlife cash fund” donations	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	\$199,918	\$269,515	35%
Amount of revenue received from round-up donations	FY20	\$55,403	\$378,479	585%
Amount of revenue received from private donations	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	\$382,000	\$783,521	105%
Revenue received from the issuance and renewals of the Wildlife Sporting License Plate	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	\$106,570	\$755,354	609%



## Goal 3: Recruiting and Retaining Qualified Employees

Managing Colorado's wildlife, parks and outdoor recreation resources requires the dedication of thousands of hard working staff, as well as volunteers who donate their time. Recruiting and retaining quality employees from diverse backgrounds is essential to achieving CPW's mission and strategic goals. DNR's commitment to its employees is reflected in its 6.9% turnover rate (FY23), one of the lowest employee turnover rates of all State agencies.

### Recruiting new employees

CPW regularly looks for ways to recruit and retain a highly-qualified and diverse workforce. Specifically, staff would like to grow the pool of qualified applicants for the park manager and wildlife manager positions, which are hard-to-fill positions. To accomplish this goal, the agency made significant changes to the hiring process for these officer positions. In 2021, CPW's process took approximately eight months from when positions were announced to when new employees were hired. The process also required prospective employees to make four separate trips to the Denver area prior to a conditional job offer. In 2022, CPW reduced the time from job announcement to when conditional job offers were made to just 1.5 months. The in-person steps of the hiring process were all done within about one week, and many applicants were able to accomplish this during just one trip. CPW also secured a waiver to accept applications from out-of-state applicants for these positions, and launched a digital advertisement campaign to promote the openings. In 2023, CPW received 484 applicants for the 2024 hiring class.

Partner organizations throughout Colorado are also important sources of future talent for CPW. CPW continues to identify ways to strengthen its relationships with partner organizations to create career pathways, apprenticeships, and robust internships to promote agency awareness and the growth in diverse candidate pools for open positions at CPW. In FY24, staff strengthened partnerships with three key organizations, Colorado Youth Corps Association, Hispanic Access Foundation, and Environmental Learning for Kids, all known for their commitment to professional development and mentorship. Two of these partnership agreements have been finalized, outlining mutual goals, responsibilities, and expectations with the hope of creating a robust pipeline of talented applicants.

### Retaining existing employees

CPW takes seriously the importance of investing in its highly qualified employees. To advance this goal, the Organizational Development Section staff are developing a pilot program to promote peer coaching and mentoring. The Peer Support Team met several times in 2023 and staff is currently refining the training requirements and policies to fully implement the Peer Support Program.

The Organizational Development Section staff have also been sending out email communications about training opportunities to CPW staff quarterly, and piloted a program with Franklin Covey to bring in training options for supervisors and individual contributors. Participants had an "all access pass," which made the full content of Franklin Covey materials and all of their courses available in self-directed learning options.



### Increasing volunteer resources

Volunteerism is a cost-effective way to help manage Colorado's natural resources while cultivating stewardship and building stronger connections between CPW and local communities. CPW's volunteers are critical to achieving the agency's mission and serve in a variety of roles, such as camp hosting, education and outreach, community science, habitat and trail work, maintenance and construction, wildlife projects, customer service, and many more.

CPW's Volunteer Program provides recruitment, screening, training, retention, support and resources for state parks, wildlife areas, hatcheries, educational programs, and CPW administrative offices throughout Colorado. Ensuring the number of volunteers and their hours are tracked and reported consistently is a continuous challenge. In FY24, volunteer coordinators provided daily support to volunteers and staff to ensure they know how to use the volunteer database to track volunteer activity consistently and accurately. Staff also sent bi-annual, personalized "call-for-hours" emails to remind all volunteers to record their time. The Volunteer Database also includes tools that automatically calculate volunteer hours for scheduled activities and shifts. In FY24, approximately 4,800 volunteers contributed approximately 274,000 hours of time. This is an equivalent of 132 FTE and an economic impact of over \$9.9 million.

Developing staff skills and knowledge on how to best engage volunteers is essential to effectively achieve CPW's mission. During FY24, staff implemented two training opportunities, including a full-day training on volunteer and partner engagement for 33 new park rangers and wildlife managers, and the annual Education and Volunteer Training, which focused on planning accessible education and volunteer programs with 58 attendees. Participants had positive reviews of both of the training opportunities.



Staff also conduct an annual volunteer and staff survey to assess experiences. The results help to inform statewide and regional strategies. The results of the FY24 survey indicate that among volunteers

- ▶ 97% enjoy volunteering with CPW
- ▶ 97% agree that their volunteer service is meaningful and makes a positive difference
- ▶ 94% are satisfied with their experience
- ▶ 94% would recommend volunteering with CPW to a friend or family member

Additionally 52% of volunteer respondents purchased a hunting or fishing license, 31% purchased a state park pass, 35% purchased merchandise, 29% reserved campsites, and 21% donated via in-kind goods.

The FY24 results are similarly positive for staff indicating that:

- ▶ 99% are satisfied with their experience working with volunteers
- ▶ 96% agree that volunteers are partners in achieving their work
- ▶ 95% agree that volunteers help meet their program/site goals
- ▶ 90% agree that volunteering helps people understand our mission and agency better

Finally, staff sought to foster partnerships with volunteer organizations, agencies, and groups to actively recruit new volunteers. Among other activities in FY24, staff signed a new contract with Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado, which included two trainings per year to expand the skills and capacity of CPW staff and volunteers related to stewardship projects. Also in 2024, staff began developing partnerships with Out Boulder County, LGBT+ Outdoors and Inside Out Youth Services to engage the LGBTQIA+ community.



TABLE 3				
GOAL #3. Recruiting and retaining qualified employees to manage wildlife, park, recreational, and aquatic resources				
Metric	Baseline Year	Baseline Data	FY 2024	FY 2024 % Change (from baseline)
Number of applicants for Park Manager position (that met minimum qualifications)	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	112	332	196%
Number of applicants for District Wildlife Manager (that met minimum qualifications)	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	95	152	60%
Number of applicants for Hatchery Technician (that met minimum qualifications)	FY23	14	59	321%
Volunteer hours	FY18	303,853	274,219	-10%
Volunteers who enjoyed working with CPW per the Volunteer Satisfaction Survey (percent)	FY19	88%	97%	10%
Turnover rate (DNR)**	FY18	7.6%	6.9% in FY23	N/A

\*\* Figures for DNR's turnover rate were unavailable for FY24 at the time of reporting. FY23 values have been used instead. Year-to-year changes in DNR's turnover rate are not calculated. The figures shown represent the actual turnover rates.

## Goal 4: Supporting Access Programs on Public and Private Lands

Access to Colorado's lands, waters, and open spaces for hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation opportunities is vital, contributing significantly to the state's outstanding quality of life, legacy, and economic health. Increasing access to public and private lands for anglers, hunters, and all outdoor recreationists is an important priority for CPW.

### Expanding access through trails

Since its establishment in 1971, CPW's Recreational Trails Program has actively encouraged the development of trails through a number of annual grant programs. Local, county, and state governments, federal agencies, special recreation districts, and non-profit organizations with management responsibilities over public lands may apply for and are eligible to receive non-motorized and motorized trail grants. CPW strives to enhance the experience of Colorado trail users by funding trail maintenance, enforcement, planning, and construction grants and increasing the number of hours of maintenance performed by trail crews. The State Trails Program continues to emphasize maintenance projects for both non-motorized and off-highway vehicle (OHV) trail grant projects to address the increased need to repair and improve existing trails and address resource impacts due to increased visitation on public lands. In FY24, they funded almost 150,542 trail crew hours and awarded over \$15.4 million in grants, including:

- ▶ 24 non-motorized trail grants totaling over \$2.4 million,
- ▶ 5 Land and Water Conservation Fund grants for community projects totaling almost \$5.5 million,
- ▶ 52 off-highway vehicle (OHV) grants totaling over \$6.2 million, and
- ▶ 36 snowmobile grants totaling nearly \$1.3 million.

### Expanding access to wildlife-related recreation

CPW partners with landowners to expand access to Colorado's outdoors by acquiring public access easements for fishing and hunting on private land. Through the Colorado Wildlife Habitat Program (CWHHP), an annual, incentive-based funding program, landowners have the opportunity to voluntarily protect important wildlife habitat and provide wildlife-related recreation access to the public. The program accomplishes strategic wildlife conservation goals and public access goals using conservation easements, public access easements, and in some circumstances, fee title acquisitions. In FY24, CPW funded conservation easements on 11,300 acres, acquired about 1,900 acres of fee title, and acquired public access on around 9,300 acres of private land. Through partnerships, the CWHHP has helped protect hundreds of thousands of acres of critical wildlife habitat while maintaining working lands and providing public access for wildlife-related recreation opportunities to Colorado residents and nonresidents alike.

Hunters, anglers, and wildlife-recreation enthusiasts can also access Colorado's lands through the Public Access Program (PAP). The PAP provides limited, seasonal hunting and fishing opportunities on Colorado Trust Lands across the state. State Trust Land enrolled in the PAP is open to a variety of wildlife-related uses and most are also working ranches leased for agriculture. After undertaking a large expansion of the PAP program in 2020 and 2021, enrollments in the PAP remained largely stable at around 965,900 acres. The large expansions in 2020 and 2021 doubled the amount of publicly accessible trust land from 478,000 in 2018.

Together with other CPW transactions outside of these programs, as of July 1, 2024, CPW held access rights to almost 1,680,900 acres for wildlife-related recreation statewide, a 41% increase from the baseline in FY18.



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In addition, CPW provides short-term access for hunters through several programs, including the Walk In Access (WIA) program, the Ranching for Wildlife (RFW) program and the Bighorn Sheep Access Program (BSAP). The WIA program is designed to open privately-owned land to public small and big game hunting by entering into annual public access agreements with landowners willing to allow public hunting on their land. Each year, CPW holds an enrollment period for landowners to offer their property into the WIA Program. In FY24, CPW enrolled over 215,000 acres in the WIA program for small game hunting and over 175,00 acres for big game hunting.

Similarly, CPW's Ranching for Wildlife Program provides Colorado residents a unique opportunity to hunt on private ranch land that is normally closed to the public. Participating ranches provide public hunting access to their land free of charge to those who draw licenses. The number of licenses on each ranch is determined by negotiations between the landowner and CPW. In addition, participating landowners are required to improve habitat on their ranch for both game and non-game animals, helping to preserve and enhance open spaces for wildlife to live and thrive and keep the hunting heritage alive for future generations.

As of FY24, 24 ranches are enrolled in the program, providing more than 985,900 acres of access to around 1,000 licensed public hunters. Moreover, RFW facilitated the removal of 31,500 ft of fences to assist wildlife movement, and maintained or developed 161 ponds and 22 miles of riparian habitat.

Finally, CPW's Bighorn Sheep Access Program continues to offer unique public access for bighorn sheep hunting on private lands in the southeastern region of Colorado. This innovative program provides incentives for landowners with suitable habitat to establish and maintain bighorn sheep herds in alignment with CPW management goals. Nine ranches currently participate in the program, providing around 590,000 acres of access to bighorn sheep hunting in Colorado. Collaborations with ranches on research, population monitoring and information sharing remain a significant contribution to managing these wildlife resources. While the number of sheep licenses allocated for the public remains small, these licenses provide truly unique public access to private lands.

**TABLE 4**

**GOAL #4. Supporting access programs on public and private lands, including the renewal of existing high-priority leases that provide public access for hunters, anglers, and outdoor recreationists**

Metric	Baseline Year	Baseline Data	FY 2024	FY 2024 % Change (from baseline)
Number of non-motorized trail grants awarded	FY18	21	24	14%
Non-motorized trail grants funding	FY18	\$3,433,893	\$2,439,277	-29%
Land and Water Conservation Fund grants awarded	N/A*	N/A*	5*	N/A*
Land and Water Conservation Fund grants funding	N/A*	N/A*	\$5,478,998	N/A*
Number of OHV trail grants awarded	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	53	52	-2%
OHV trail grants funding	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	\$4,339,000	\$6,236,360	44%
Number of snowmobile trail grants awarded	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	44	36	-18%
Snowmobile trail grants funding	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	\$967,000	\$1,290,780	33%
Trail crew hours	FY20	112,500	150,542	34%
Total acres of hunting and fishing access statewide	FY18	1,190,000	1,680,900	41%
Increase in Colorado Wildlife Habitat Program acreage	FY19	4,410	22,500	410%
Total Public Access Program acreage	FY19	478,600	965,900	102%
Walk In Access Program - Small game access acres	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	177,621	215,359	21%
Walk In Access Program - Big game access acres	FY19	86,191	175,756	104%

\*Note: in FY 2022 CPW began tracking Land and Water Conservation Fund grants separately from other non-motorized trail grants.

# Goal 5: Increasing and Improving Big Game Populations

Colorado's big game herds require thoughtful and intensive management to accommodate the many and varied public demands and growing impacts from people. CPW is actively working to balance the ever-increasing human presence on the landscape with the conservation of Colorado's world-class natural resources.

## **Increasing and improving habitat for big game populations**

Colorado is home to some of the largest big game herds in North America, primarily because of the state's diverse landscape and varied habitat types. During FY24, CPW spent nearly \$57.2 million for conservation and improvement of big game habitat in Colorado, a 79% increase from the baseline amount spent for these purposes.

CPW monitors how investments in habitat affect big game, using Herd Management Plans (HMPs). HMPs integrate the plans and intentions of CPW with the concerns and ideas of land use management agencies and interested members of the public to establish long-term objectives for how each big game species and herd across the state should be managed. HMPs are created through a public process, using the best available scientific information on herd populations and habitat conditions. In preparing an HMP, CPW staff aim to balance the biological capabilities of the herd and its habitat with the public's demand for wildlife recreational opportunities. In FY24, the Parks and Wildlife Commission approved 11 pronghorn herd management plans for the Southeast Region and 14 deer herd management plans for the Southwest Region, well exceeding the target of completing 16 HMPs each year.

CPW staff work hard to ensure big game populations stay within the population objective ranges specified in the HMPs and other regional and statewide management plans, with the goal of increasing the proportion of elk, deer and pronghorn antelope herds that fall within target management objective ranges by 5% each year. An assessment conducted in January 2024 shows that 14 (34%) of the state's elk herds are within their HMP population objective ranges, which is a 7% decrease from the previous year. Thirteen (47%) of the state's pronghorn antelope herds are within their population objective ranges, which is a 22% increase from the previous year. And, 18 (36%) of the state's deer herds are currently within their population objective ranges, which is a 6% increase from the previous year. The decrease seen with elk is largely because the HMPs for many elk herds were updated and changed their management objectives. It will take time to shift the population to fit within the new objective ranges.

CPW has a long history of studying and managing mule deer, dating back to the agency's origins. Together with the public and stakeholders, CPW works to stabilize, sustain, and increase mule deer populations in Colorado resulting in greater hunting and wildlife-related recreation opportunities. Using the West Slope Mule Deer Strategy (WSMDS), approved in 2014, to guide management decisions, over 8,200 acres of big game habitat improvements were completed in FY24. The projects cover a variety of habitat enhancements from native sagebrush community restoration to timber removal and invasive species control. While this amount is less than the baseline year of FY19, it appears that was an artificially high year, as the number of acres improved have remained largely consistent over the past five years. Additionally, the costs to implement all types of

habitat improvements have increased by roughly 20-40% since FY19. Staff continue to leverage their resources to improve as many acres as possible through partnerships with state, federal, and private partners. CPW also provided project planning and technical support, seed mixing logistics and seed storage through the Delta Seed Warehouse, and grant support for many partners throughout the Western Slope in priority WSMDS landscapes.

CPW's Habitat Partnership Program (HPP) also helps to improve habitat for big game populations. Local HPP committees and the State Council, made up of nearly 150 volunteers representing livestock growers, sportspersons, federal land management agencies and CPW staff met throughout the year to cooperatively discuss and work towards reducing conflicts between big game and agricultural operators associated with forage and fences. In FY24, HPP improved nearly 50,400 acres of habitat, a nearly 140% increase from baseline levels.

Finally, the Colorado Wildlife Habitat Program (CWHP) offers private landowners the opportunity to voluntarily protect their property containing important wildlife habitat through establishing conservation easements. The program prioritizes grants for conservation easements that support big game winter range, wildlife crossings, and migration corridors, public access for hunting, fishing, and wildlife viewing, and protecting habitat for species of concern. In FY24, CPW increased the total number of interests enrolled in the CWHP by more than 22,500 acres.

## **Improving big game winter range and migration corridors**

The health of Colorado's big game herds depends on intact and connected landscapes and habitats. For this reason, CPW is committed to protecting big game herds by maintaining habitat connectivity and working to remove migration barriers that may exist. Many big game species exhibit annual migrations along traditional routes and between seasonal ranges, and the conservation of these migration corridors and critical winter ranges is a significant priority.

In alignment with Executive Order 2019-011 for the conservation of Colorado's Big Game Winter Range and Migration Corridors, Terrestrial Branch staff continue to gather and analyze big game movement data and are working to identify priority areas through the development of the Colorado Statewide Habitat Conservations and Connectivity Plan (SHCCP). Staff are currently in the final stages of the spatial modeling process for the SHCCP and are on track to finalize the plan in December 2024.



**TABLE 5**

**GOAL #5. Increasing and improving the state's big game populations through investments in habitat and conservation, including increased support for highway wildlife crossings to protect animals and motorists**

Metric	Baseline Year	Baseline Data	FY 2024	FY 2024 % Change (from baseline)
Amount spent on big game habitat and conservation	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	\$31,974,000	\$57,186,875	79%
Number of acres improved through Habitat Partnership Program projects	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	21,215	50,354	137%
Number of acres improved through Colorado West Slope Mule Deer Strategy	FY19	11,300	8,200	-27%

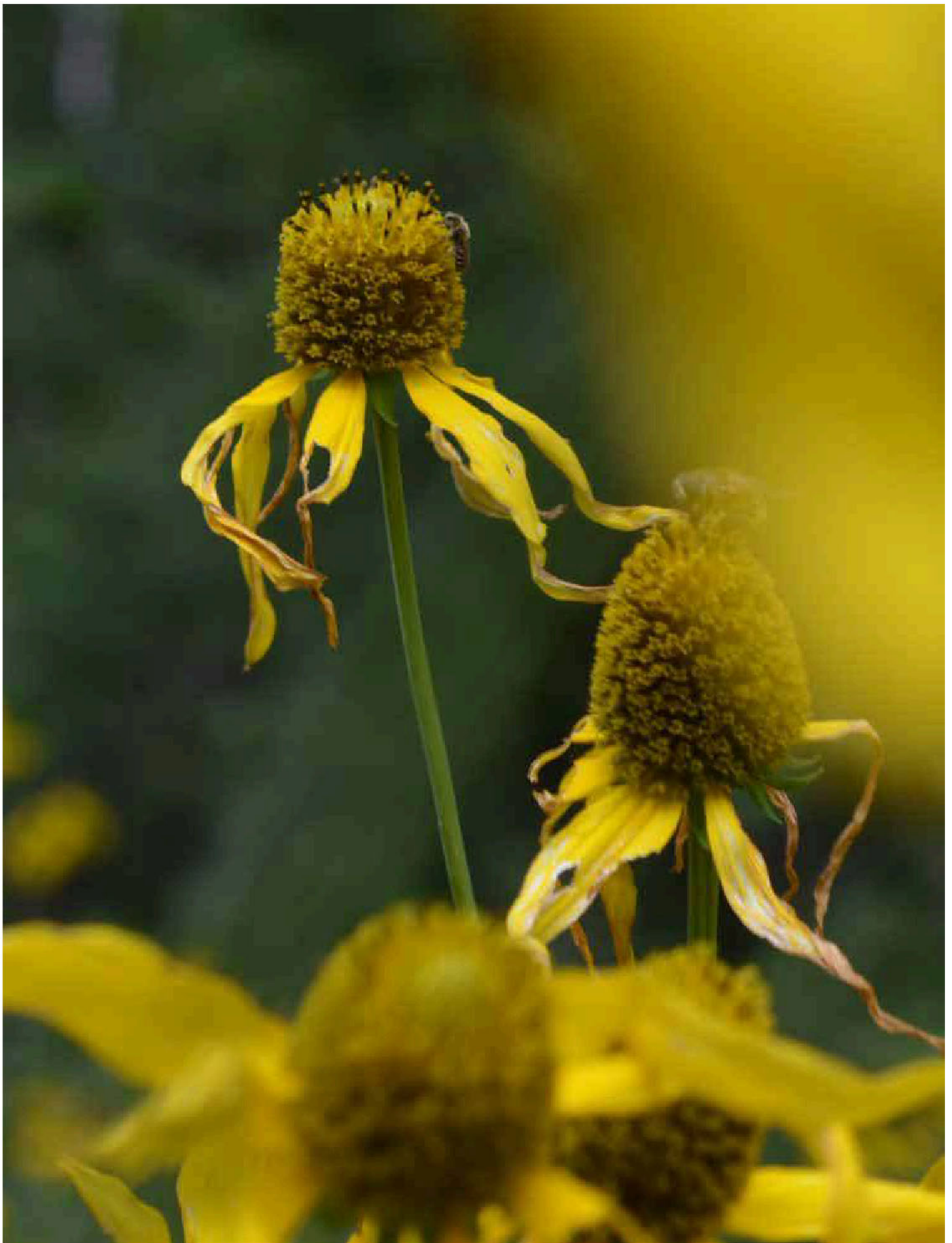


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# Goal 6: Identifying and Beginning to Plan a New Colorado State Park

Colorado Parks and Wildlife operates 43 state parks, providing public access to almost 230,000 acres of park land statewide. Colorado’s state parks continue to draw high numbers of visitors – in FY24, over 18.5 million people visited our state parks, a 26% increase from the baseline amount. With many state parks experiencing record high attendance, it is important to maintain exceptional customer service to ensure a positive and memorable visitor experience. In some areas, unprecedented visitation has resulted in damage to natural resources, highlighting the need to educate crowds on the importance of recreating responsibly, continued investment from CPW in operations and maintenance, and where possible, expansion of the state park system to accommodate increasing public demand.

In the last five years, CPW has acquired several properties and is working to develop each new property, as outlined below. CPW is also adding space and facilities to its existing state parks. In FY24, CPW acquired properties adjacent to Sweitzer Lake State Park, growing the park property from 314 acres to 593 acres. CPW and the public are now considering plans to upgrade and expand the park, including providing additional camping, more day-use areas, and more water sports at the park.

## Planning Fishers Peak State Park

The 19,200-acre Fishers Peak property was purchased in February 2019 through a collaboration between the City of Trinidad, The Nature Conservancy, The Trust for Public Land, GOCO, and CPW. In April 2020, CPW acquired the land and began the process of developing Colorado’s next state park. Several significant milestones have been accomplished in the past three years, including opening 250 acres of the park to the public on October 30, 2020 and finalizing the Master Plan, which serves as an overarching guide for the operation of the park. In FY24 staff began developing a trail to the top of Fishers Peak, which opened in November 2023. Additionally, staff have been working with the Colorado Department of Transportation to secure the entrance road off of Interstate 25, which will facilitate the design and construction of the main entrance, visitor center footprint, campgrounds and other major trailheads.

## Sweetwater Lake Project

On August 31, 2021 the Forest Service closed on the purchase of the 486-acre Sweetwater Lake area property. The Conservation Fund purchased the property from a group of private investors a year earlier to hold it for eventual Forest Service purchase. Local governments including counties and towns, commercial entities, non-profit organizations, and individuals came together to provide funding and support for this acquisition. A partnership was formed between Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Eagle Valley Land Trust, and USFS White River National Forest to create and implement a long-term plan improving public access to Sweetwater Lake, enhancing the recreation opportunities historically offered in the Sweetwater Lake area and protecting the social and natural characteristics of the area. In May 2024, a site design proposal was made available for public review, initiating the official National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis. This process will provide additional opportunities for public comment, during which an in-depth analysis of environmental and socioeconomic considerations will take place to determine the path forward for the future at Sweetwater Lake.

## Colorado Clays State Recreation Area

Also in 2021, CPW closed on the purchase of the Colorado Clays Shooting Park in Adams County and began managing it as a state recreation area. Located just 30 minutes northeast of Denver and near Barr Lake State Park, Colorado Clays Shooting Park offers both recreational and competitive shooters a wide variety of clay target shooting, including sporting clays, skeet and trap, as well as both rifle and pistol shooting. Colorado Clays will continue to operate under a concession agreement through 2026. Work to develop a sustainable operating plan and hire a CPW lead to oversee the operation and transition is ongoing and expected to be fully implemented in January 2027.

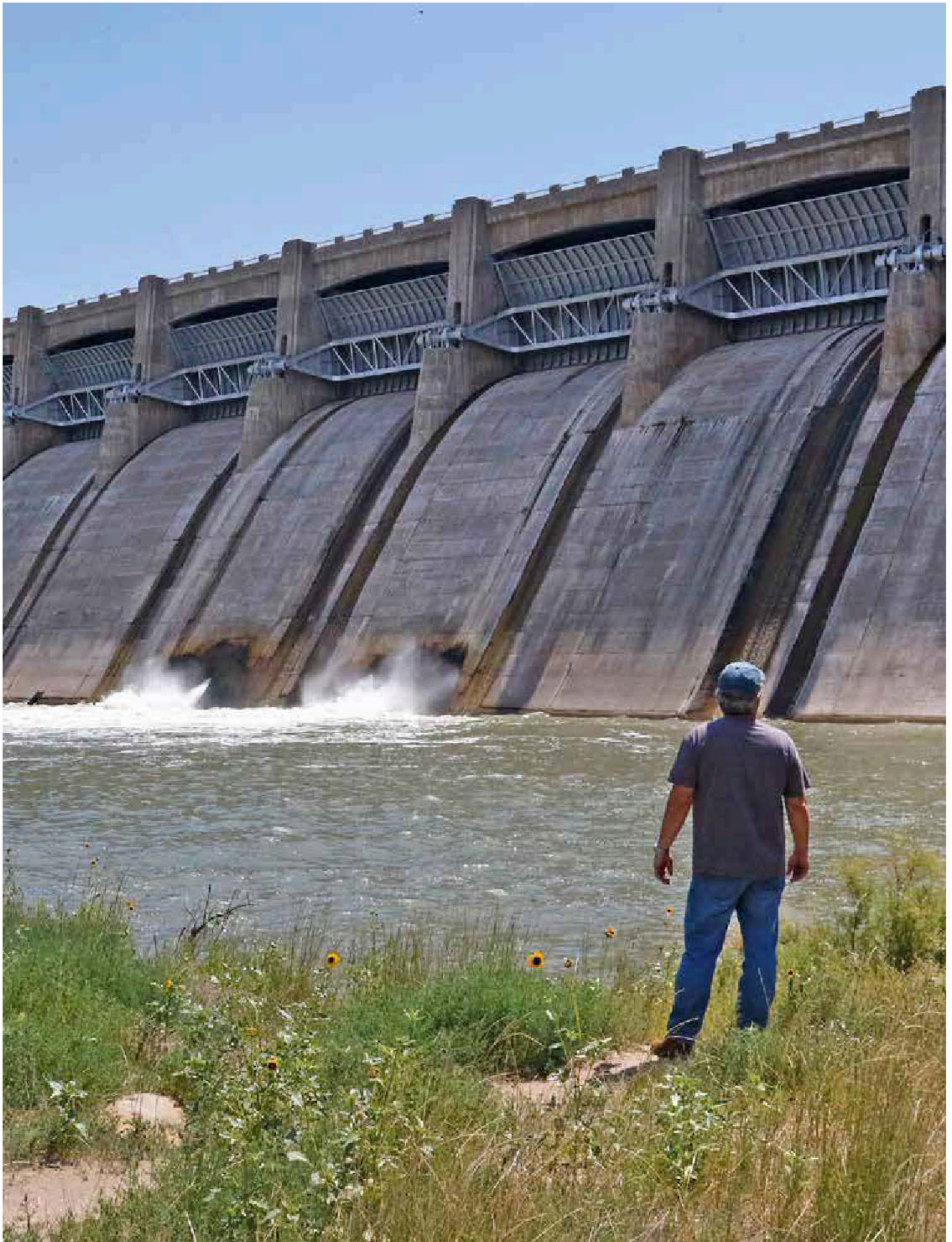
## Investing in operations, maintenance and customer service

Funding from the General Assembly in 2021 added \$34 million of General Fund dollars (Senate Bill 21-112 and House Bill 21-112) to support parks infrastructure projects to provide facility and public access improvements at 16 parks statewide by expanding or enhancing facilities that are seeing a great deal of public use (see Goal 9). Staff continued to work on these projects throughout FY24. Project highlights include, but are not limited to electrical upgrades at North Sterling and Jackson Lake state parks, as well as the expansion of Highline Lake State Park. In line with this commitment, during FY24, CPW devoted nearly \$16.2 million to maintain and manage recreational opportunities at Colorado’s state parks, up 179% from the baseline levels.

Additionally in 2023 and 2024, to better accommodate customers and continue the agency’s culture of exceptional customer service, CPW implemented a timed entry reservation system, which is being piloted at Eldorado Canyon State Park during the summer months. The pilot program had great initial success in reducing crowding at the entrance and parking areas. Staff have also been exploring camera systems and other technologies as possible methods of reporting when parking lots reach capacity in real-time. Additionally, through a partnership with Rivian, LLC, CPW is installing a series of public electric vehicle chargers throughout the state park system. In FY24, over 80% of the chargers on the priority installation list have been installed, including a bank of chargers at Cherry Creek State Park.

TABLE 6				
GOAL #6. Identifying and beginning to plan the development of a new Colorado state park and investing in other initiatives to increase park visitation, maintain excellent customer service, and generate revenue				
Metric	Baseline Year	Baseline Data	FY 2024	FY 2024 % Change (from baseline)
Amount spent on operations and maintenance at state parks	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	\$5,800,000	\$16,183,177	179%
Annual state park visitation	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	14,646,128	18,503,228	26%
Acres of accessible state park land	FY18	221,139	229,443	4%





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# Goal 7: Reduce Maintenance Backlog and Repair for High Risk Dams

CPW owns over 115 dams throughout the state, the largest inventory of dams of any owner in Colorado. Of these, 90 dams are jurisdictional, meaning the size of the dam is large enough to threaten human life and cause property damage downstream if the dam were to fail. As such, maintenance and rehabilitation of CPW's dams is of paramount importance. CPW's full-time Dam Safety Engineers, with the help of other dedicated staff around the state, manage all of the work and monitoring on CPW's dams. They perform regular dam safety inspections on all CPW-owned dams and maintain up-to-date Emergency Action Plans for First Responders. CPW is making dam rehabilitation a priority by allocating capital construction funds to dam improvement projects ahead of any other capital construction projects. Prioritizing the financial needs of CPW's dams has allowed for significant improvements to be made in dam operating conditions over the last few years.

## Rehabilitating High Risk Dams

Water impounded by CPW's dams is used for downstream irrigation, fish hatchery operations, and water-based recreational activities. CPW's reservoirs are some of the most popular places to visit in the state. However, public infrastructure and population centers are often located downstream, which increases the likelihood of devastating consequences in the event of a dam failure.

In 2014, CPW conducted a Screening Level Risk Analysis (SLRA) investigating the risk profiles of its dams to inform the prioritization of future repairs and maintenance. The SLRA and subsequent research found 22 of CPW's dams to be in a "high hazard" condition, with a loss of human life expected in the event of a dam failure. Another 15 dams were considered "significant hazards," with major property damage expected in the event of a failure. Of these 15 dams, three are Parks-owned dams and 12 are Wildlife-owned dams. The average age of the 37 highest risk dams is 75 years old, including six dams that were constructed over 100 years ago.

Based largely on the potential for loss of human life downstream and risks to environmental, economic, and recreational resources in the event of a dam failure, the SLRA evaluated the risk of CPW's high- and significant-hazard dams, further identifying 11 dams in CPW's portfolio that posed the greatest risks. Since the 2014 release of the SLRA's findings, four additional dams were added to that list when their routine safety inspections revealed conditions that exceeded an acceptable level of risk. In July 2021, funding became available to hire a consulting firm to update the dam SLRA for all high and significant hazard dams, and work by the consultant was ongoing in FY24.

Since FY16, CPW has committed almost \$61.7 million to rehabilitate high risk dams. The total dam maintenance and repair estimate for all CPW dams is about \$120.7 million. As of FY24, seven of the greatest risk dams have been repaired, one has full repairs under construction, data revealed major work was not necessary on one, and the five remaining priority dams have full repairs planned in the next 5+ years.

## Reducing dam maintenance and repair backlog

As dams age and their structures deteriorate, more involved activities are needed to return them to compliance with safety regulations. Since FY16, CPW has allocated almost \$21.3 million for routine dam maintenance and just under \$2.2 million for other dam improvements. The availability of maintenance funding allows CPW to proactively care for these assets in an effort to reduce the need for large-scale, costly rehabilitation that can result from prolonged deferred maintenance.

During FY24, the Dam Safety Unit spent a good deal of time preparing for the next round of major construction on many projects. Repair and rehabilitation construction was completed on the Alberta Park and Rito Hondo dams. Additionally, several engineering studies were completed for dam repair and rehabilitation, including: Elk Falls Dam (Staunton State Park), Meadow Creek Dam, and Garnet Mesa Dam (Sweitzer State Park). Additional remote monitoring was also successfully installed at high- and significant-hazard dams. The next large construction project began on the Tarryall Dam and the work is expected to be completed in late 2024.

TABLE 7				
GOAL #7.Reducing the \$44.76 million maintenance and repair backlog by 50% for the 11 dams owned and operated by the division that pose the highest risks to life and property and establishing an appropriate funding stream to continue maintenance of all the division's 110 dams				
Metric	Baseline Year	Baseline Data	FY 2024	FY 2024 % Change (from base-line)
Amount awarded for dam maintenance for high risk dams (cumulative)	Sum of FY16, FY17, FY18, FY19	\$29,534,172	\$61,659,472	109%
Amount awarded for dam maintenance (cumulative)	Sum of FY16, FY17, FY18, FY19	\$4,326,007	\$21,295,107	392%
Amount awarded for other dam improvements (cumulative)	Sum of FY16, FY17, FY18, FY19	\$749,568	\$2,169,568	189%



# Goal 8: Increase the Number of Fish Stocked and Renovate Fish Hatcheries

CPW operates 19 hatcheries that are dedicated to improving Colorado's fish populations and serve a critical role in the recovery of native fish species. Since 1881, CPW has been the lead agency responsible for fisheries management of public waters in Colorado. CPW's hatcheries support and enhance angling opportunities through the breeding, hatching, rearing, and stocking of fish in lakes and streams across the state. CPW's hatcheries also provide public educational opportunities through hatchery tours and informational materials.

## Increasing fish production

FY24 was a productive year at CPW's hatcheries with nearly 98.8 million fish stocked, including catchable trout, sub-catchable trout, non-game species, and warm water species. This level of fish production is about 7% more than the baseline total number of fish stocked. Overall, in FY24, CPW stocked over 3.2 million catchable trout, nearly 14.0 million sub-catchable trout, nearly 208,000 non-game species, and almost 81.3 million warm water species. Declines in the numbers of sub-catchable trout and non-game species stocked in FY24 in comparison to the baseline years are largely due to year-to-year variabilities in wild fish spawning.

## Modernizing and renovating the hatchery system

The need for modernization and repair to CPW's aging hatchery system is essential to its continued operation for the next 100+ years. In 2019, CPW began a multi-phase process to modernize the hatchery system. The Hatchery Section began work on Phase III of the Hatchery Modernization Plan in 2022. Phase III provides a comprehensive design for modernizing Mt. Shavano Fish Hatchery. After severing ties with the initial design consultant due to insufficient deliverables, in FY24, CPW worked with the new consultant to create a new site layout, and has reviewed specifications for the new facility's construction.

CPW continues to increase investments in its existing hatcheries. In FY24, over \$2.8 million was awarded for hatchery maintenance, renovation and modernization. This represents an over 130% increase in funding compared to the baseline. In line with needed improvements to CPW's hatchery facilities, in FY24, the Hatchery Section worked with Capital Development and Regional staff to complete several large capital construction projects including: relining four brood ponds at the Pueblo Hatchery; repairing the Watson River line at the Watson Lake Hatchery; and, relocating the spring water collection system at the Crystal River Hatchery. Additionally, multiple small capital construction projects involving hatchery maintenance and efficiency were also completed.



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TABLE 8				
GOAL #8. Increasing the number of fish stocked in Colorado water to more than 90 million through the development of a statewide hatchery modernization plan, renovation of one of the state's 19 fish hatcheries, and reduction in the maintenance backlog for all hatcheries, many of which are 70 to 100 years old				
Metric	Baseline Year	Baseline Data	FY 2024	FY 2024 % Change (from baseline)
Number of catchable trout stocked	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	2,881,000	3,207,504	11%
Number of sub-catchable trout stocked	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	18,563,000	13,954,816	-25%
Number of non-game species stocked	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	284,000	207,619	-27%
Number of warm water species stocked	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	70,514,000	81,294,697	15%
Total number of fish stocked	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	92,241,000	98,797,066	7%
Amount awarded for hatchery modernization/ renovation/ maintenance	FY18	\$1,216,225	\$2,818,664	132%



# Goal 9: Reduce Large Capital Construction Backlog

Colorado Parks and Wildlife manages more than 1,400 facilities across Colorado, including buildings, shooting ranges, dams, roads, trails and other constructed facilities that provide opportunities for recreation, education, and research. Similar to other physical assets, CPW’s facilities and infrastructure need continuous maintenance and repair, and replacement after a certain point.

## Reduce capital construction and maintenance backlog

CPW continues to make significant investments in capital construction, allocating over \$81.5 million to large capital construction and nearly \$10.3 million to small capital construction projects for parks and wildlife in FY24<sup>2</sup>. An increase to both the parks and wildlife small capital program budgets over the years allows the regions to address currently identified maintenance needs, as well as emergency repairs on CPW facilities as they arrive. This has allowed the regions to adapt to ever changing maintenance needs, allowing facility maintenance to take place before larger and more costly repairs became necessary.

In total, 132 small capital projects and 14 large capital projects were funded in FY24 for maintenance and replacement work around the state. Projects under construction in FY24 include:

- ▶ Littleton Office Parking Lot Replacement – This project rehabilitated the existing parking lots at our Littleton Office Complex, which serves thousands of customers in the southern Denver metropolitan area. The parking lots were in poor condition and had not been rehabilitated in a number of years.
- ▶ Deweese Reservoir State Wildlife Area (SWA) Road Improvements – The existing gravel roads had become difficult and unsafe to drive on during wet conditions as water was not properly running off. This project re-graded the access roads and added additional road base throughout the SWA for public access.
- ▶ Watson State Fish Hatchery Waterline Repair–This project replaced the waterline coming from the Poudre River to the hatchery, which was so badly leaking that much of the water was not reaching its required destination. This pipeline allows the hatchery to cool down water temperatures in the fish rearing raceway tanks in the summer months. This helps CPW to maintain fish health and to continue to produce fish to be stocked throughout the state.

In addition, funding from the General Assembly in 2021 added \$34 million of General Fund dollars (Senate Bill 21-112 and House Bill 21-112) to support infrastructure projects at 16 parks statewide by expanding or enhancing facilities that are seeing a great deal of public use. Staff continued to work on these projects throughout FY24, with all of the projects completed by June 30, 2024. Project highlights include, but are not limited to electrical upgrades at North Sterling



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TABLE 9				
GOAL #9. Reducing the division’s known \$26 million large capital construction and maintenance backlog by 50% and establishing a capital development backlog strategic plan to provide a stable funding stream to address future maintenance projects at state wildlife areas and state parks				
Metric	Baseline Year	Baseline Data	FY 2024	FY 2024 % Change (from baseline)
Amount allocated to small capital construction	FY18	\$3,412,118	\$10,265,238	201%
Amount allocated to large capital construction	FY18	\$10,333,380	\$81,530,410	689%

<sup>2</sup>This includes money allocated to hatchery modernization as mentioned in Goal 8 and internal shooting ranges as mentioned in Goal 1.



# Goal 10: Reduce the Need to List Additional Species

Conservation of threatened and endangered species and habitat is an area of significant focus for CPW. Conservation involves careful land use decisions, concentrated research, and cooperative partnerships. By balancing species-specific needs and broad reaching habitat-based projects, CPW uses many tools to effectively manage Colorado's wildlife and crucial habitat.

## Investing in non-game species conservation

In FY24, CPW spent almost \$13.3 million on the conservation of non-game species and habitat through research, population status monitoring and reintroduction, and habitat protection and restoration benefiting threatened and endangered species. This is a 48% increase from baseline levels. A sample of the activities in FY24 includes:

- ▶ Statewide monitoring programs for multiple bird and bat species
- ▶ Annual lek counts for greater sage-grouse, Gunnison sage-grouse, Columbian sharp-tailed grouse, lesser prairie-chicken, and greater prairie-chicken
- ▶ Research and monitoring programs to improve survey techniques and understand population status for olive-backed pocket mouse, Preble's meadow jumping mouse, black-footed ferret, burrowing owl, mountain plover
- ▶ Disease monitoring and mitigation for sylvatic plague and its effects on prairie dog and ferret populations, and white-nose syndrome in bats
- ▶ Species-specific studies to determine the population status of pinyon jay, white-tailed ptarmigan, black-footed ferret, and black rail
- ▶ At least 203 fish surveys in 109 waters representing all major drainages in the state.

## Investing in wetlands conservation

Wetlands are lands affected by water that support unique plants and soils, making up just 2% of Colorado's landscape but providing benefits to over 75% of the state's wildlife species. The protection, restoration, and enhancement of wetlands and riparian areas is vital to the conservation of wildlife diversity in the state. Wetland and riparian landscapes provide crucial feeding, resting and rearing habitat, and movement corridors. They also improve water quality and quantity, and create open space, educational opportunities, and economic benefits from hunting, fishing and bird watching.

CPW's Wetlands Program annually awards competitive grants to CPW staff and partners for projects that restore wetlands and riparian areas. These projects create new managed wetlands, improve the function and management efficiency of existing managed wetlands, remove non-native invasive vegetation and replace with native vegetation, manage invasive cattail growth in wetlands, restore riparian habitat impacted by mining, and reconnect incised creeks with their floodplains. Projects are conducted on state wildlife areas, state parks, and other public and private lands. The program drives funding priorities to those projects benefiting species of greatest conservation need identified in the State Wildlife Action Plan.

In FY24, CPW awarded 10 grants for a total of \$1,121,000 to 22 funding partners improving 4,700 acres of wetlands or riparian areas and benefiting eight priority waterfowl species and seven Tier 1 species of greatest conservation need (SGCN). One project within the Kawuneeche Valley in Rocky Mountain National Park will reconnect Baker Creek to its floodplain using low-tech restoration techniques, benefiting waterfowl, beaver and boreal toads. Another project with the Larimer Conservation District will work with private landowners to restore 3.2 miles of riparian corridor on Trail Creek, Black Creek and the South Fork of the Cache La Poudre River, benefiting waterfowl, beaver, and the Preble's meadow jumping mouse.

Under the Fall Flights program authorized by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA), state agencies contribute funding towards wetland and grassland conservation in this landscape. Forty-three states currently contribute to this program. State contributions are matched 1:1 by Ducks Unlimited, then matched again by the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (federal funds administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), resulting in \$4 of conservation for every \$1 invested by state agencies. The Future Generations Act authorized a fee increase for the Colorado Waterfowl Stamp that allowed CPW to step up its investments in this critical initiative.

## Partnering in pursuit of mutual goals

Collaboration with partners, including federal and state agencies, private landowners, and non-governmental organizations, is essential to conserving Colorado's SGCN. In FY24, CPW's Conservation Coordinators worked along with partners to manage nongame species and habitat through research, population status monitoring, reintroduction,



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habitat protection, and habitat restoration, achieving CPW’s goal to participate in collaborative planning and partnership processes for at least 10 terrestrial SGCN. A sample of the work performed in FY24 includes:

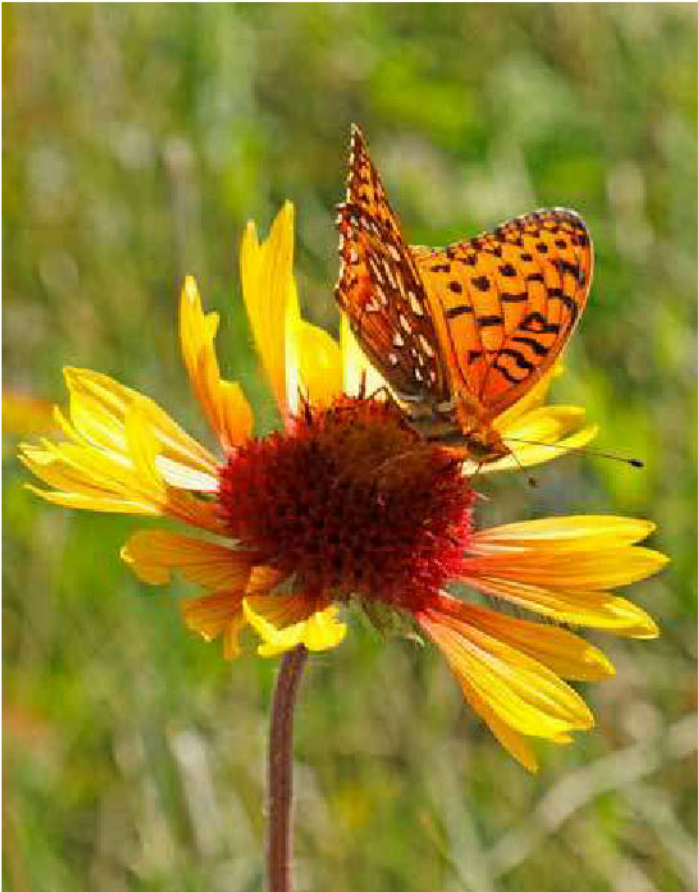
- ▶ Participating in multi-agency/organization working groups to address conservation concerns for lesser prairie-chicken, brown-capped rosy finch, pinyon jay, black-footed ferret, black-tailed prairie dog, greater sage-grouse, Gunnison sage-grouse, and others
- ▶ Developing stakeholder coalitions to support wolverine reintroduction and to support invertebrates and rare plants
- ▶ Coordinating and developing the 2025 State Wildlife Action Plan revision
- ▶ Participating in Colorado Statewide Habitat and Connectivity Plan discussions
- ▶ Continuing collaboration with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) related wolf reintroduction, planning for wolverine reintroduction, and other priority Endangered Species Act-listed species
- ▶ Conducting or coordinating 194 Boreal toad surveys, covering almost all know breeding sites and current and potential reintroduction sites
- ▶ Conducting visual encounter surveys at 65 sites for the Northern leopard frog, and sampling environmental DNA and conducting automated acoustic monitoring at a subset of sites

Privately held land and water resources provide important habitat to many wildlife species in Colorado. CPW has a long history of partnering with private landowners across the state to manage and perpetuate wildlife populations and conserve and improve habitat. Many of CPW’s private land efforts seek to couple habitat conservation with public access to wildlife resources. Private landowners have played key roles in the conservation of rare species, such as black-footed ferrets, and, without their support, Colorado’s remarkable wildlife abundance and rich hunting and fishing opportunities would not exist.

TABLE 10				
GOAL #10. Reducing the need to list additional state trust species under the federal Endangered Species Act of 1973 by partnering with private landowners to improve species distribution and abundance monitoring and disease prevention efforts				
Metric	Baseline Year	Baseline Data	FY 2024	FY 2024 % Change (from baseline)
Amount spent on nongame species conservation	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	\$8,933,515	\$13,259,115	48%
Total amount of grants for Wet-lands Program	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	\$978,139	\$1,121,000	15%

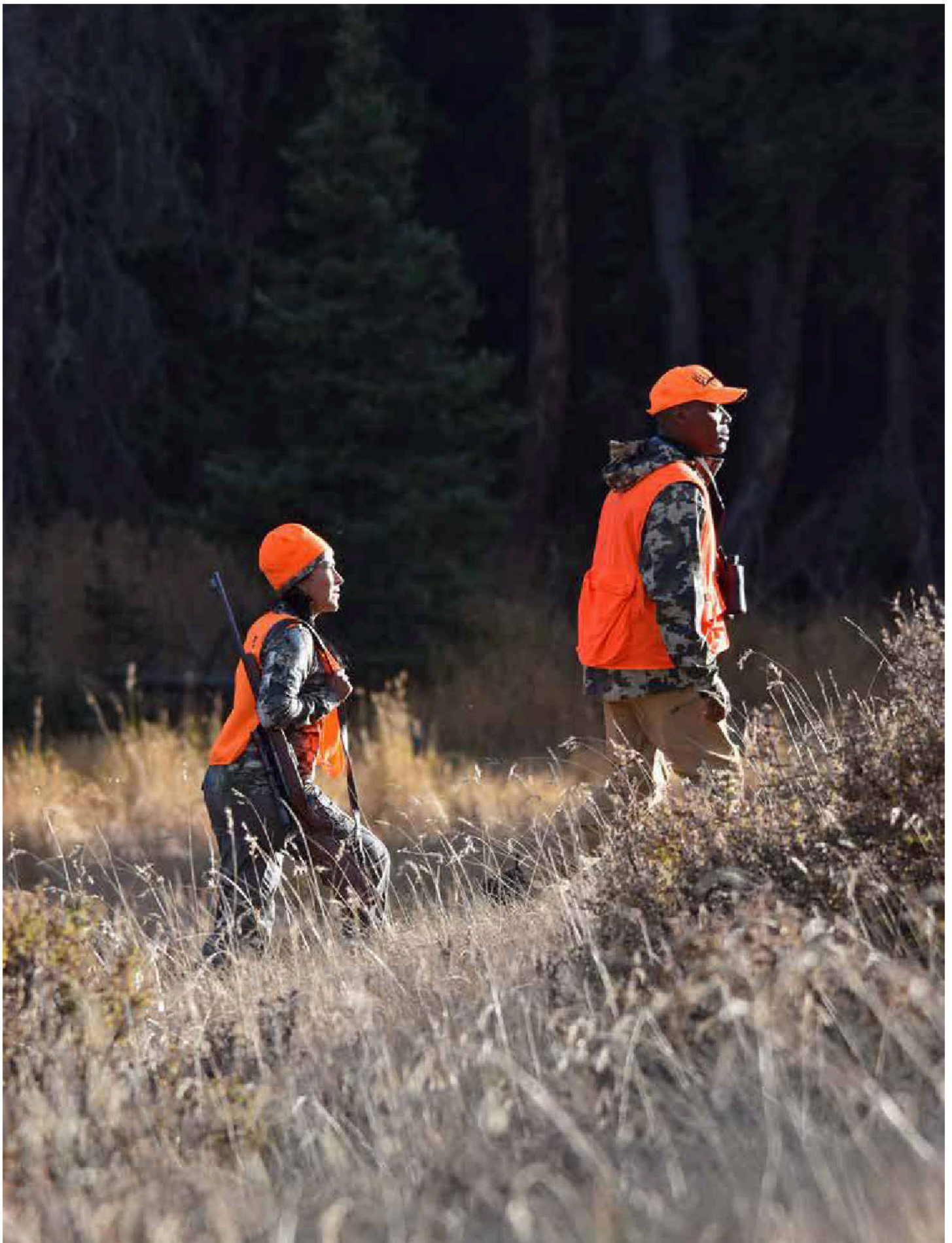


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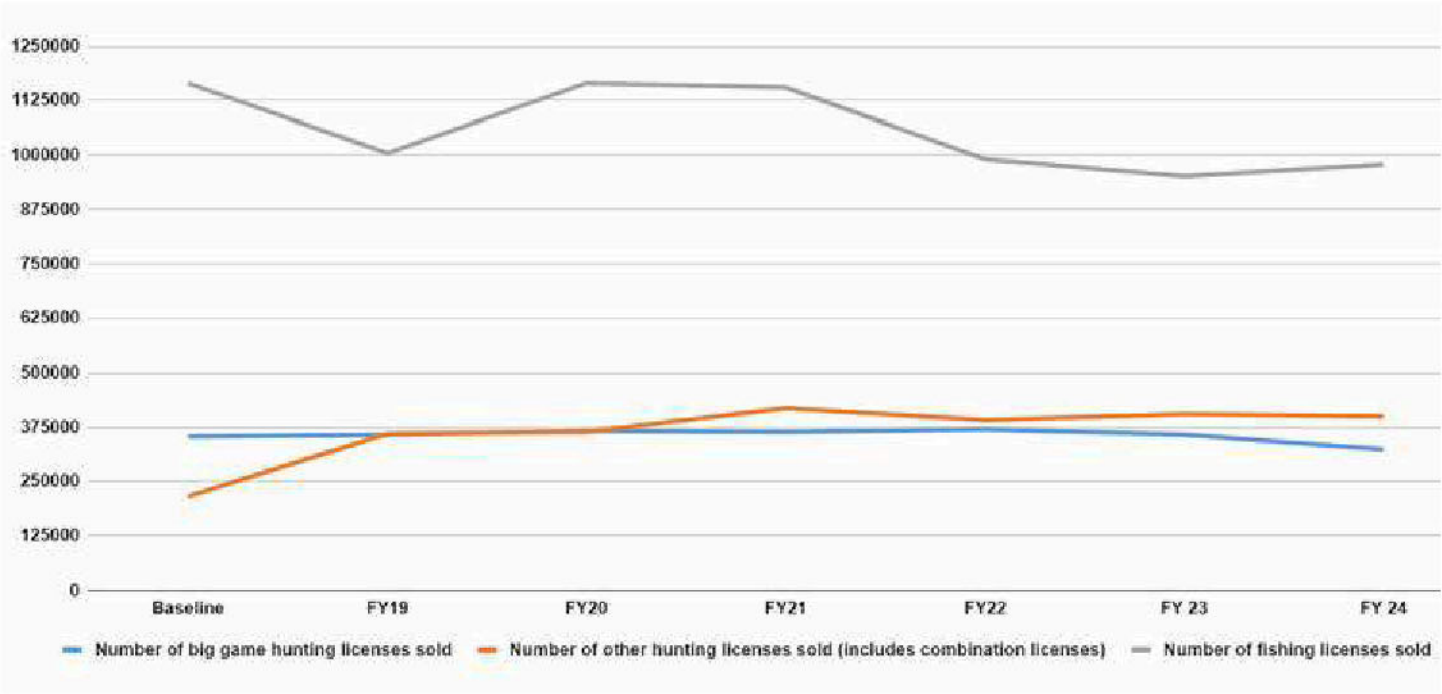
# Impact on License Sales

During FY24, CPW sold over 323,900 big game hunting licenses, an 8% decrease from the baseline average. Additionally in FY24, CPW sold nearly 400,700 other licenses including combination hunting/fishing licenses. This is a 85% increase from the baseline average, which is likely attributable to the introduction of the qualifying license requirement implemented in 2019. This change requires all applicants to hold a qualifying license<sup>3</sup> in the current license year prior to applying for the big game draw. Finally, in FY24, CPW sold over 978,800 fishing licenses, a 16% decrease from the baseline average.

<sup>3</sup> Qualifying licenses include resident and non-resident spring turkey and annual small game, resident annual combination small game/fishing, resident senior combination small game/fishing, and resident Veteran's lifetime combination small game/fishing licenses.

TABLE 11				
Impact on license sales				
Metric	Baseline Year	Baseline Data	FY 2024	FY 2024 % Change (from baseline)
Number of big game hunting licenses sold	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	353,811	323,905	-8%
Number of other hunting licenses sold (includes combination licenses)	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	216,029	400,692	85%
Number of fishing licenses sold	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	1,164,239	978,820	-16%

Figure 4: Trends in License Sales





# Appendix 1

## Reporting Requirements for the Future Generations Act

The Hunting, Fishing, and Parks for Future Generations Act was signed into law on May 4, 2018. It grants the PWC the authority to enact modest increases to state park entrance fees and increase prices for in-state hunting and fishing licenses. The new revenue derived from this authority will allow CPW to begin to address projected funding shortfalls of \$30 million annually for wildlife and \$11 million annually for parks by 2025.

The Act specifies 10 goals to fulfill by 2025, including:

- I. Increasing the number of hunters and anglers in Colorado in the face of national declines in hunting and fishing numbers through investments in recruitment programs, such as hunter education and Fishing is Fun, the development of the Cameo Shooting and Education Complex, and grants for shooting ranges in all regions of the state;
- II. Partnering with stakeholders to develop strategies to engage all outdoor recreationists, including hikers, bikers, climbers, and wildlife watchers, in funding the division and commission, maintenance of state lands and facilities, and management of wildlife;
- III. Recruiting and retaining qualified employees to manage wildlife, park, recreational, and aquatic resources;
- IV. Supporting access programs on public and private lands, including the renewal of existing high-priority leases that provide public access for hunters, anglers, and outdoor recreationists;
- V. Increasing and improving the state's big game populations through investments in habitat and conservation, including increased support for highway wildlife crossings to protect animals and motorists;
- VI. Identifying and beginning to plan the development of a new Colorado state park and investing in other initiatives to increase park visitation, maintain excellent customer service, and generate revenue;
- VII. Reducing the \$44.76 million maintenance and repair backlog by 50% for the 11 dams owned and operated by the division that pose the highest risks to life and property and establishing an appropriate funding stream to continue maintenance of all of the division's 110 dams;
- VIII. Increasing the number of fish stocked in Colorado water to more than 90 million through the development of a statewide hatchery modernization plan, renovation of one of the state's 19 fish hatcheries, and reduction in the maintenance backlog for all hatcheries, many of which are 70 to 100 years old;
- IX. Reducing the division's known \$26 million large capital construction and maintenance backlog by 50% and establishing a capital development backlog strategic plan to provide a stable funding stream to address future maintenance projects at state wildlife areas and state parks; and
- X. Reducing the need to list additional state trust species under the federal "Endangered Species Act of 1973" 16 U.S.C. sec. 1531 et seq., by partnering with private landowners to improve species distribution and abundance monitoring and disease prevention efforts. (Section 2 (1)).

The Act also specifies the following reporting requirements:

"BY NOVEMBER 1, 2019, AND BY EACH NOVEMBER 1 OF EACH YEAR THEREAFTER, THE DIVISION SHALL PREPARE A WRITTEN REPORT ON:

(A) THE IMPACT THAT LICENSE FEE INCREASES, AS ESTABLISHED ON THE EFFECTIVE DATE OF THIS SECTION OR BY THE COMMISSION PURSUANT TO SECTION 33-4-102 (1.5)(a), HAVE HAD ON THE TOTAL NUMBER OF SALES OF LICENSES;

(B) AN ACCOUNTING OF PROGRAM EXPENDITURES MADE WITH THE INCREASED FEES AND THE IMPACT OF THOSE EXPENDITURES ON THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE DIVISION'S GOALS AND OBJECTIVES AS SET FORTH IN SECTION 2 OF SENATE BILL 18-143, ENACTED IN 2018; AND

(C) A LIST OF NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS THAT, IN THE PREVIOUS TWELVE MONTHS, RECEIVED GRANT MONEY FROM THE SALE OF STATE MIGRATORY WATERFOWL STAMPS FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NORTH AMERICAN WATERFOWL MANAGEMENT PLAN PURSUANT TO SECTION 33-4-102.5 (3)(b) AND AN EXPLANATION OF EACH GRANT AWARD MADE.

(II) THE DIVISION SHALL MAKE THE REPORT AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC AND SHALL SEND EACH REPORT TO THE AGRICULTURE, LIVESTOCK, AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AND THE AGRICULTURE, NATURAL RESOURCES, AND ENERGY COMMITTEE IN THE SENATE, OR THEIR SUCCESSOR COMMITTEES.

(b) ON OR BEFORE MARCH 1, 2022, AND ON OR BEFORE MARCH 1, 2025, THE DIVISION SHALL PRESENT ITS FINDINGS FROM, AND A SUMMARY OF, ITS MOST RECENT REPORT PREPARED PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (1)(a) OF THIS SECTION TO A JOINT SESSION OF THE AGRICULTURE, LIVESTOCK, AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AND THE AGRICULTURE, NATURAL RESOURCES, AND ENERGY COMMITTEE IN THE SENATE, OR THEIR SUCCESSOR COMMITTEES.

(2) THIS SECTION IS REPEALED, EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2025." (33-4-121(1)(a)(I), C.R.S.)

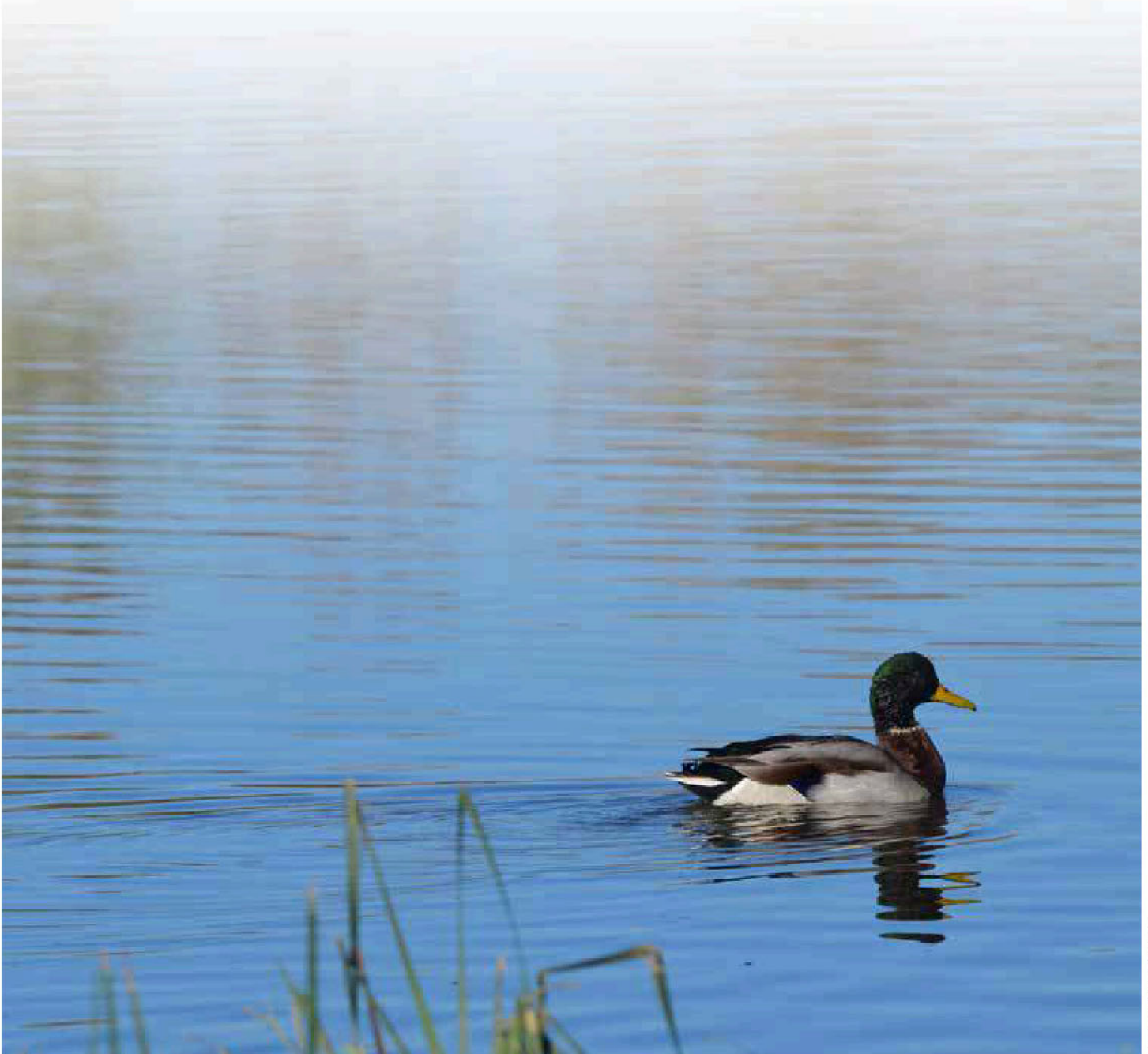


## Appendix 2

### Colorado Waterfowl Stamp Fund Grants

Goal 10 discusses CPW's Wetlands Program grant awards made annually on a competitive basis to CPW and partner organizations for wetland and riparian restoration work. These projects are conducted on state wildlife areas, state parks, and other public and private lands. Projects that benefit Tier 1 and 2 at-risk wildlife species from the State Wildlife Action Plan, along with waterfowl, are a priority for funding. For Colorado Waterfowl Stamp funds specifically, \$400,000 was available for the FY24 grant cycle.

These grant funds supported two newly-approved projects to develop comprehensive wetland restoration and management plans for Red Lion State Wildlife Area (SWA) and Escalante SWA. The funding also supported two previously-approved projects with wetland restorations currently underway, including the San Luis Valley National Wildlife Refuges (NWR) (Alamosa, Baca, and Monte Vista NWRs), and the AFWA-sanctioned Fall Flights program (breeding duck habitat restoration in Alberta, Canada). Waterfowl Stamp grant partners in FY24 include Ducks Unlimited.



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## Appendix 3

Keep Colorado Wild Act Report 2024





As part of the Keep Colorado Wild (KCW) Act of 2021, CPW and the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) created an optional annual state parks pass that can be added when registering passenger vehicles, light trucks, motorcycles and recreational vehicles. The pass can be purchased for \$29 during the annual vehicle registration process, online at myDMV.Colorado.gov, at an MV Express Kiosk and at a county motor vehicle office. The KCW Pass offers a 60% savings in comparison to a traditional annual state parks pass. The pass provides car, bike and foot entry into all 43 Colorado state parks for the period of one year.

The purpose of the pass is to provide consistent, reliable financial contributions that allow the state parks system to continue to grow with Colorado's population, while both motivating and accommodating increasing demand for outdoor recreation opportunities. Since becoming available to purchase in January 2023, the KCW pass has raised approximately \$62 million through June 30, 2024, providing additional resources to help CPW accomplish the following 10 goals:

- A. Providing a simple and affordable state parks and public lands access pass to ensure that Colorado's outdoors are welcoming and accessible to all and that users contribute to keeping Colorado wild
- B. Ensuring sufficient staffing and resources to manage and protect Colorado's existing state parks
- C. Supporting the thousands of search and rescue volunteers in Colorado that risk their lives responding to backcountry emergencies and developing educational programs and campaigns to promote backcountry safety
- D. Protecting winter recreationists by supporting backcountry avalanche safety and awareness
- E. Building and maintaining new state parks on a regular basis in partnership with local governments
- F. Growing the Division's capacity to address outdoor recreation beyond state parks, including on federal lands
- G. Increasing state trails program funds for trail stewardship, new trails, and river recreation projects
- H. Dedicating resources for the Division's State Wildlife Action Plan to conserve vulnerable species and habitats
- I. Supporting the Division's initiatives that are focused on equity, diversity and inclusion in the outdoors
- J. Funding Colorado Regional Outdoor Partnerships to support community-driven conservation and recreation planning projects

As directed in the KCW Act, the first \$32.5 million in revenue generated through the sales of the KCW Pass will go toward state park maintenance and development (Goals A and B), the next \$2.5 million will go toward search and rescue teams (Goal C) and \$1 million to the Colorado Avalanche Information Center (Goal D). Any revenue beyond that will go to wildlife projects and outdoor educational programs (Goals E - J) (Table 1).

TABLE 1			
Revenue distribution specified in 33-12-108(4)(e), C.R.S.			
	Amount (\$)	Destination of funds	Purpose of funds
First \$36 million	\$32,500,000	Parks and Outdoor Recreation Cash Fund	State parks maintenance and furtherance of goals (A) and (B)
	\$2,500,000	Search & Rescue Fund	Furtherance of goal (C)
	\$1,000,000	Colorado Avalanche Information Center Fund	Furtherance of goal (D)
Remaining money	1/2	Wildlife Cash Fund	Furtherance of goals (E) to (J) related to wildlife management
	1/2	Parks and Outdoor Recreation Cash Fund	Furtherance of goals (E) to (J) related to parks and outdoor recreation

### Goal progress base lining and tracking

This section provides a summary of the progress achieved related to the relevant, above-listed goals during the 2023-2024 Colorado state fiscal year (FY24). Because the changes to the fee structure were initiated on January 1, 2023, the majority of the financial benefits were not registered until FY24. Additionally, the spillover of funds into the additional goals (Goals C-J) after the initial \$32.5 million in revenue was generated did not occur until the end of FY24. As a result, resources for Goals C-J will not be available until FY25 or FY26, depending on the timeline the General Assembly makes budget appropriations. For that reason, only Goals A and B will be reported on in detail in this report. A brief description of the proposed funding for Goals C-J has been included where possible.

Following the narrative description of the activities undertaken during FY24 for each of the goals, a metrics summary table provides a snapshot of specific data CPW tracks year-over-year to ground our work in measurable and reportable ways. The metrics tables include baseline data, FY23, and FY24 data (where possible), and presents increases or decreases from the baseline data to help understand changes over time.



## Goal A

**Providing a simple and affordable state parks and public lands access pass to ensure that Colorado's outdoors are welcoming and accessible to all and that users contribute to keeping Colorado wild.**

Providing a means for all Coloradans to access Colorado's outdoors and contribute to conserving Colorado's natural resources is a primary goal of the KCW Pass. Towards that end, CPW invested in marketing the pass and removing as many barriers as possible to participation. This work has paid off with significant sales of the pass and a relatively high level of participation since it was launched in January 2023.

### Marketing KCW Pass

CPW's Marketing and Communication Unit has worked with the DMV to promote the KCW Pass. With General Assembly approval of its budget request, CPW increased funding for outreach, including materials for county clerk and recorder offices, and communications and customer service staffing to support the pass.

In FY24, CPW increased the total amount invested in marketing KCW from \$1.2 million to \$2.8 million in a targeted campaign that includes posters, emails, mailers and videos encouraging Coloradans to purchase the pass. CPW staff spent the additional \$1.6 million marketing budget to produce print, video, digital ads, radio, streaming TV, paid social media, and even billboards to bring awareness about the value and benefits of the pass.

This marketing information was included in all press releases about park events, and social media content was created throughout the year. Staff also coordinated with the Department of Revenue to refresh all in-office materials at all DMV and CPW offices. CPW will continue marketing efforts to reach new customers to increase pass participation.



## Removing Barriers to Participation

CPW's annual \$14 Centennial State Park Pass helps reduce barriers and provides income-eligible Colorado residents with a lower-cost park pass. A Centennial State Park Pass holder, along with other vehicle occupants, can enter any Colorado state park in the vehicle of their choice.

To apply, a resident must show a Colorado photo identification card, complete an application and meet the income requirements. Starting in January 2023, CPW expanded the eligibility requirements to apply for a Centennial Pass. Currently, residents who are eligible for the following state and federal aid programs, regardless of income requirements, also qualify for a Centennial State Park Pass:

- ▶ Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF),
- ▶ Health First Colorado (Colorado's Medicaid program),
- ▶ Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP),
- ▶ Food Distribution on Indian Reservations (FDPIR),
- ▶ Low-income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP) and
- ▶ Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)
- ▶ Have a U.S. Federal Tax form that includes Form 1040 line 15 or Form 1040-SR line 15
- ▶ Have a signed affidavit that a tax form does not have to be filed.

Also starting in January 2023, CPW made a walk-in version of the KCW Pass available to those without cars, further removing barriers to participation.

Finally, with the launch of the My CPW app in February 2022, it has become easier for the customers to apply for, purchase and display CPW products on their phones. Enhancements to the app continue to be made, including the addition of the KCW Pass, which was fully implemented in January 2024, and provides customers easier access to all of the KCW Pass benefits.

### Sales of KCW Pass

Sales of the KCW Pass have increased significantly since its launch in January 2023. In FY24 (the first full fiscal year of pass sales), CPW sold 1,475,200 KCW passes (Table 1). Customers transitioned from buying the regular annual pass to the KCW pass throughout FY23 and into FY24, as seen by the decrease in annual pass sales. However, the total number of park passes sold has continued to increase over that period – around 38% in FY23 and 75% in FY24 – indicating a substantial increase in access to Colorado's state parks. Similarly, the total amount of revenue generated from park passes and entry fees has increased significantly from the baseline level – around 60% in FY23 and 79% in FY24.

### Percentage of Vehicles "Opted-in"

Another indication of the level of participation in the KCW Pass program is the percentage of eligible vehicles that have "opted-in" to receive the pass during the annual motor vehicle registration process. In FY24, 27% of eligible vehicles chose to purchase the KCW Pass. CPW will continue to monitor this indicator in subsequent years.



TABLE 2

**GOAL A. Providing a simple and affordable state parks and public lands access pass to ensure that Colorado's outdoors are welcoming and accessible to all and that users contribute to keeping Colorado wild**

Metric	Baseline Year(s)	Baseline Data	FY 2023	FY 2023 % Change (from baseline)	FY 2024	FY 2024 % Change (from baseline)
Number of KCW passes sold	FY22	0	768,867*	N/A*	1,475,200	N/A
Number traditional annual passes (not KCW) sold	2-year average FY21, FY22	141,418	86,626	-38.7%	38,655	-72.7%
Total volume parks passes and entry fees sold**	2-year average FY21, FY22	1,352,406	1,861,010	37.6%	2,361,559	74.6%
Total revenue from park passes and entry fees**	2-year average FY21, FY22	\$25,592,463	\$40,952,589	60.0%	\$45,910,114	79.4%
% eligible vehicles opted-in	FY22	0%	29%*	N/A*	27%	N/A

\*KCW pass started Jan 2023, so only six months of data available (Jan 2023-June 2023)

\*\*Includes regular annual, multiple annual, Aspen Leaf, vehicle daily, special walk-in daily, lifetime Aspen Leaf, Keep Colorado Wild, and other park passes and entry fee.

## Goal B

### Ensuring sufficient staffing and resources to manage and protect Colorado's existing state parks

Colorado's state parks continue to draw high numbers of visitors – in FY24, over 18.5 million people visited. Ensuring Colorado's state parks system has sufficient staffing, resources, and infrastructure to meet high levels of use and visitation, requires additional staff and increased funds for the operations and maintenance of state parks.

#### Increasing staffing at state parks

With state parks operating 7 days a week, 365 days a year, ensuring sufficient staffing for daily operations is a challenge throughout the park system. Moreover, increased visitation requires additional management of park operations, customer service, maintenance of trails, parking areas, restrooms, bodies of water, and other features within the parks to protect the habitat and to ensure the parks are safe and enjoyable places to spend time outdoors.

While the process of allocating and expending funds generated through the sales of the KCW pass to increase staffing takes several fiscal years to implement, CPW has already begun to increase the number of employees dedicated to state parks operations, with a 4.7% increase in full time equivalent (FTE) staff in FY23 (Table 3). (Note: FY24 data will not be available until November 1, 2024.) Furthermore, in the FY24 legislative budget cycle (Long Bill), CPW received approval for a larger increase in state park staffing funds to further support operations and expansions at existing state parks.

#### Increasing funds for operations and maintenance

Similarly, state park operating budgets continue to be stressed due to rising costs and the expansion of available facilities for recreation. Parks need more funding to cover the growing cost of consumables, utilities, materials, and labor. CPW has already begun to increase the resources dedicated to operations and maintenance at state parks in FY23 and FY24 (Table 3), and it received approval for further increases in funding to support operations and maintenance at existing state parks through the FY24 legislative budget cycle (Long Bill).

TABLE 3

**GOAL B. Ensuring sufficient staffing and resources to manage and protect Colorado's forty-two existing state parks**

Metric	Baseline Year(s)	Baseline Data	FY 2023	FY 2023 % Change (from baseline)	FY 2024	FY 2024 % Change (from baseline)
Actual Full Time Equivalent (FTE) State Park Operations Employees*	2-year average FY21, FY22	286.6	300.1	4.71%	**	**
Amount spent on operations and maintenance at state parks	2-year average FY21, FY22	\$12,492,833	\$15,081,708	20.7%	\$16,183,177	29.5%

\*Data Source: Schedule 14 submitted through the annual budget process. Does not include temporary seasonal staff and only includes state FTE.

\*\*FY24 data will be included in FY26 Schedule 14 with November 1, 2024 Governor's budget submission.



Goals C-J

After the initial \$32.5 million in revenue was generated, the remaining funds “spilled over” into the additional goals (Goals C-J), as directed in 33-12-108(4)(e), C.R.S (Table 1).

The “spill over” occurred at the end of FY24, when \$2.5 million went to the Search and Rescue program to support Goal C, \$1 million went to the Colorado Avalanche Information Center to support Goal D, about \$1.8 million went to the Wildlife Cash Fund to support goals E through J related to wildlife management, and about \$1.8 million went to the Parks and Outdoor Recreation Cash Fund to support goals E through J related to parks and outdoor recreation (Table 4).

Because the distributions were made near the end of FY24 and depending on the timeline the General Assembly makes budget appropriations, resources for Goals C-J will not be available for use until FY25 or FY26. CPW will continue to report on progress made towards achieving these goals in subsequent fiscal years.

TABLE 4			
Revenue distribution for FY24			
	Amount (\$)	Destination of funds	Purpose of funds
First \$36 million	\$32,500,000	Parks and Outdoor Recreation Cash Fund	State parks maintenance and furtherance of goals (A) and (B)
	\$2,500,000	Search & Rescue Fund	Furtherance of goal (C)
	\$1,000,000	Colorado Avalanche Information Center Fund	Furtherance of goal (D)
Remaining money	\$1,800,000	Wildlife Cash Fund	Furtherance of goals (E) to (J) related to wildlife management
	\$1,800,000	Parks and Outdoor Recreation Cash Fund	Furtherance of goals (E) to (J) related to parks and outdoor recreation



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