



2017 Annual Report on the Administration of Colorado Parks and Wildlife January 2018

To:
Joint House Agriculture, Livestock and Natural Resources Committee
Senate Agriculture, Natural Resources and Energy Committee

I. Executive Summary

On June 6, 2011, Governor Hickenlooper signed Senate Bill 11-208 into law, merging the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation and the Division of Wildlife into the Division of Parks and Wildlife, referred to herein as Colorado Parks and Wildlife or CPW. On June 4, 2012, House Bill 12-1317 was signed into law to finalize the merger of the Divisions and to create the Parks and Wildlife Commission. A primary goal of the merger was to create more efficient and effective services through economies of scale and use of shared resources while creating a more comprehensive outdoor recreation mission for the agency. Since then, a great deal of work has been undertaken to plan and implement the merger.

The Division continues to seek out and implement efficiencies made possible through the merger. This includes standardizing and streamlining processes, consolidating programs, eliminating duplication, capturing economies of scale and other strategies to integrate the two former agencies to the greatest extent feasible. Throughout these efforts, CPW has continued outreach to key stakeholders to ensure the agency continues to meet their needs in accordance with our mission to perpetuate the wildlife resources of the state, to provide a quality state parks system, and to provide enjoyable and sustainable outdoor recreation opportunities that educate and inspire current and future generations to serve as active stewards of Colorado's natural resources.

II. Statutory Requirements

Among the requirements of H.B. 12-1317 is the delivery to the Legislature of an annual report, more fully described below:

C.R.S. 33-9-106 (2)

“Beginning in 2013 AND NOTWITHSTANDING SECTION 24-1-136 (11), C.R.S., the executive director shall report annually to the joint house agriculture, livestock, and natural resources committee and the senate agriculture, natural resources, and energy committee, or any successor committees, regarding the administration of the division, including an evaluation of division resources and their utilization and an identification of opportunities for efficiencies. Each such report must summarize stakeholder outreach conducted during the prior year and must also identify disposition of assets and cost savings, both planned and realized, since the previous year, including savings pertaining to personnel, equipment, services, and provisioning.”

III. Historical Context

Prior to the merger, the former Division of Wildlife implemented a series of budget reductions to address declining revenues. One-time reductions in capital expenditures of \$15.7 million and \$11.5 million were made in FY 09-10 and FY 10-11, respectively.



During the several years prior to the merger, State Parks had also taken aggressive steps to address reductions in revenue. As recently as FY 08-09, State Parks received \$6.7 million in General Funds, but by FY 11-12, this had dropped to zero. To adapt, Parks took the following steps: eliminated 5 percent of its permanent positions and 10% of its seasonal employees; increased fees for daily passes, camping reservations and boat registration; significantly reduced administrative costs; cut services at Bonny Lake State Park during the winter months; and redirected certain funds to cover operating shortfalls. State Parks also considered repurposing or closing four parks, but the move proved to be unnecessary as the result of the merger.

On July 1, 2011, Colorado Parks and Wildlife was created from the merger of Colorado State Parks and the Colorado Division of Wildlife. From July through February 2012, the agency developed a Merger Implementation Plan, which was approved by the Parks and Wildlife Commission on February 9, 2012. In 2013, 22 positions were defunded creating annual savings of \$1.7 million.

IV. Division Resource Utilization

CPW continually seeks to maximize its resource utilization by implementing cost savings measures and capitalizing on efficiencies realized in part from the Parks and Wildlife merger. Examples of steps taken to increase utilization and efficiencies include:

- A. **Strategic Plan.** HB12-1317 called for the Commission to formulate a strategic plan based on meaningful statewide input. On November 9, 2015, the Commission adopted the [2015 CPW Strategic Plan](#) which sets a high-level vision, overarching goals, objectives, and strategies that will guide CPW's work into the future. The plan reflects a shared vision that was developed with extensive input from the Commission, staff and citizens of Colorado who utilize CPW services.

In 2016, CPW staff developed a two-year Operational Plan to implement the Strategic Plan, carried out in FY 16-17 and FY 17-18. CPW published a [FY 16-17 progress report](#) on implementation of the Strategic Plan. Development of the next Operational Plan is already underway.

One benchmark for success in the Strategic Plan is to, "Identify and communicate significant programmatic efficiencies implemented at CPW." To that end, CPW began issuing and posting [online Efficiency Success Stories](#) to increase awareness of ways CPW is implementing programmatic efficiencies.

- B. **Website Merger.** Since the merger, the former wildlife website and parks website have been merged into a single website. The CPW website uses current best practices to create a more effective communications platform for outreach and better information service for internal and external customers. Improvements include:

- As part of the merger, website staff identified the need for ongoing content redesign to provide better customer engagement and understanding of CPW's work. Web traffic has continued to increase since the CPW website was created. In 2017, web traffic reached 8.6 million visits. Of the 8.6 million visitors to the CPW website, 4 million were new users. Making sure that the CPW website was designed as a responsive website for mobile users proved critical. In 2017, users accessed the website with their mobile devices at a



higher rate than through a desktop. CPW will continue aligning its web strategies to meet the needs of CPW customers.

- Leverage website platform to coordinate agency communication to the public, streamlining with marketing efforts, agency news and updates and education. Through continued coordination and content refinement, CPW has been able to reach a broader audience by maximizing social media, partner networks and through the website. As a direct result of this coordination, many news media outlets follow CPW for immediate news coverage and story ideas.

- C. **Intranet Integration.** Before the merger of Division of Wildlife and Colorado State Parks, the two agencies had three aging intranet servers providing a way for each individual agency to communicate internally. CPW identified the need to merge all three servers into one central unified intranet. CPW, working with OIT through Common Policy, created CPW's intranet named CPWNET and launched it December 31, 2015. Using SharePoint technology, CPWNET continues to provide a shared workspace that enables CPW employees to collaborate using one server instead of three. Integrated Parks and Wildlife System (IPAWS) communication, training, employee resource links, branch and section pages, an eLibrary and agency-wide announcements available on CPWNET are used daily by CPW staff.

V. Planned Savings and Efficiencies of Merged Division Resources

The following are plans and opportunities for savings and efficiencies that CPW is actively pursuing.

- A. **IPAWS Update.** CPW and its vendor Aspira launched the first roll out of the "Integrated Parks and Wildlife System" (IPAWS) which will integrate eight CPW systems into one system. The eight systems included in IPAWS are the Total Licensing System (TLS), Hunting Reservation System (HRS), Vehicle Registration System (VRS), Internet Vehicle Registration System (IVRS), Electronic Stores (Shop@DOW & parksstore.state.co.us), Parks Automated Record Keeping System (PARKS), Campground Reservation System (CRS) and the CPW Cash Management System. Hunting Reservations, Vehicle Registrations and Special Licensing systems are scheduled to roll out later in 2018.

The vision for IPAWS is a modern web-based system that provides one-stop shopping for CPW recreationists. The information gathered from the customer will be product driven giving a personalized web user experience. IPAWS will replace manual processes with automation, allowing CPW to give consistent methods of business operations and customer processing across the State. IPAWS will provide a centralized CPW products and sales cash management using a PC based hardware and software system that supports customer management and sales of CPW products. The PC based hardware supplied by the IPAWS vendor will have been deployed to internal and external agent locations statewide. The combined customer database will allow CPW to utilize customer demographic information for communicating, planning, forecasting and customer outreach.

The potential cost saving for CPW that IPAWS may bring are value added time spent on less manual processing, for hunt and fish licenses a transaction fee based on the cost of the product rather than the method in which the product was obtained and some decline in printing costs.



- B. **Administrative Directives and Commission Policies.** CPW continues its review of the administrative directives and policies of the former Parks and Wildlife divisions to integrate them into a single set of policies and directives that reflect the requirements of the merged Commission and agency. To date, 29 administrative directives and 11 policies have been finalized. Work on this single set of policies and directives continues as part of the agency's Operational Plan.

VI. Stakeholder Outreach Efforts

CPW is committed to engaging Coloradans and visitors to inform park, wildlife and outdoor recreation management. CPW engages in a variety of stakeholder outreach efforts including, but not limited to:

- A. **CPW Financial Outlook.** CPW's revenue model is primarily dependent on user fees, not tax dollars, to support programs and operations. Resident hunting and fishing license prices have not been increased since 2006 and park entrance fees have not risen since 2010, leaving revenue relatively flat while operational costs and inflation continue to rise. At the same time, CPW faces a growing number of required expenses that are projected to leave an annual shortfall of \$30 million annually in the wildlife budget by 2025 and \$11 million annually in the parks budget by 2025. Examples include essential dam repair, keeping fish hatcheries functional, shooting ranges, unemployment insurance, mandatory wage increases and addressing CPW's maintenance backlog.

In 2017, CPW held 8 public meetings to gather public input on initial ideas for legislation that would help CPW's financial sustainability and support a bright future for hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation in Colorado. Through public meetings, online videos and public comments, over 4,500 people connected with CPW on this topic. More detailed information on the 2017 outreach efforts is available in our [summary report](#).

- B. **Partners in the Outdoors.** CPW began the Partners in the Outdoors initiative with the goal of bringing together a broad cross-section of outdoor recreation professionals committed to the future of Colorado's outdoors. This gathering provides a platform to promote connections, partnerships and initiatives that link a coalition of organizations, agencies, schools and communities together in their collective desire to impact responsible recreation, stewardship and conservation in Colorado.

The conference has shown tremendous growth over the past few years and now spans three days with over 500 participants representing well over 100 organizations. It is quickly becoming the signature event in the state of Colorado for organizations across the entire spectrum of the outdoors to collaborate and create lasting partnerships. Additional goals of the conference include: professional development, partner recognition and our partners in the outdoors grant program which provides funds to organizations working in support of our strategic goals.

At the 2017 conference, and in accordance with the development of the Colorado Outdoor Partnership (see letter C. below), conference participants considered how the outdoor industry can stay relevant amidst Colorado's changing demographics and growing population. The [SHIFT Principles](#) were again promoted and emphasized during the conference. Also known as the Principles for Advancing Outdoor Recreation and



Conservation, they are an addition to the North American Model of Wildlife Management, which CPW currently uses, and an effort to further refine an outdoor ethic that promotes both recreational enjoyment and thoughtful conservation of Colorado's special places. These principles serve as a unified framework to increase success in the conservation of public lands, waters and wildlife. More importantly, they support and advance the goals of CPW's Partners in the Outdoors program.

- C. **Colorado Outdoor Partnership.** In conjunction with the Partners in the Outdoors Conference and as a result of our interest in the SHIFT principles, CPW convened a group of leaders from recreation, land trust, conservation, sportsmen and land management organizations and agencies. The objective of the initial meeting was to share perspectives on how to best balance outdoor recreation and sustainable management of wildlife in Colorado. Since the initial formation of the group, and in light of the unique challenges Colorado is facing as one of the fastest growing states in the country the group decided to form as an ongoing coalition and renamed itself the Colorado Outdoor Partnership (CO-OP).

CO-OP members agreed on the following commitment:

The Colorado Outdoor Partnership believes that a collaboration of leaders across the state of Colorado must innovate together to ensure our private and public lands remain viable to support our diverse wildlife, outdoor recreation and agricultural heritage, and economic wellbeing. We commit to promoting the importance and stewardship of public and private lands and waters to support sustainable habitat conservation and responsible outdoor recreation. We commit to support, improve, and strengthen public and private funding to conserve these resources. Our collaborative commitment means that Colorado will remain a beautiful and healthy place to live, work and play for generations to come.

While CPW serves as the coordinating entity of the coalition, the decisions, resolutions, and strategies that come out of the CO-OP though are driven and approved by the membership. Members represent the intersection of outdoor recreation and conservation interests related to land conservation in Colorado. The CO-OP recognizes, utilizes and values Colorado's SHIFT Principles. To achieve its goals, the CO-OP has formed the following committees: Policy & Funding, Outreach and Steering. Early actions of the CO-OP include voting to support lottery reauthorization and discussing support of CPW's Future Generations bill.

- D. **Social Media.** Since the merger, CPW has increased its reach with the public on social media. In the past year, the Division has shared conservation success stories, behind-the-scenes work, recreation opportunities and fun and informative education about the state's wildlife and wild places. In 2017, CPW's total followers on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram increased by 24%. Facebook fans broke 200,000 and Instagram followers number over 60,000. Overall across all social media channels, CPW shared 43% more content than last year. The number of impressions (times CPW posts were viewed) totals over 33 million. CPW continues to look for new and innovative ways to utilize social media and build a community centered around recreation and conservation.
- E. **Other Planning and Management.** CPW values input from stakeholders to inform



planning processes that will guide future management of parks and wildlife in the state. In 2017, we sought public involvement for the development of game species management plans across the state through surveys, public meetings, and public comment and improved communication materials to make these processes more accessible to the public. CPW worked with federal partners to complete a final draft of the Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area Management Plan, which included gathering extensive public input. CPW engaged diverse communities with more comment opportunities offered in Spanish and through direct on-the-ground engagement during the update of the Sylvan Lake State Park Management Plan. In addition, CPW continued to collaborate with stakeholders through informal roundtables, including the Sportsmen's Roundtable and Wildlife and Habitat Roundtable, to share information and discuss issues related to outdoor recreation and wildlife management.